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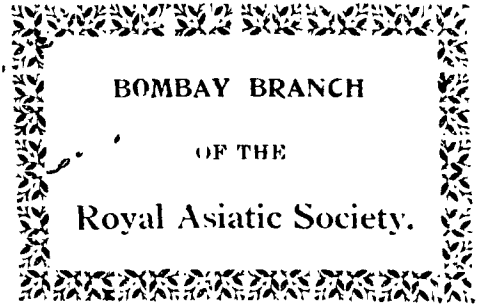

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THE TURKISH PROBLEM

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THINGS SEEN AND A FEW DEDUCTIONS

BY

COUNT LÉON OSTROROG

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY WINIFRED STEPHENS

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WITH A MAP

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LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
1919

PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED
LONDON AND BECCLES

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Some British friends—experts in Eastern questions, who have lived many years in the East and learnt the languages and moods of the men of the East—have expressed the view that it would not be inexpedient to publish an English translation of this book, deeming it, in their kind indulgence, a truthful picture of the mosaic of nations and creeds constituting Turkey, that main factor in the Eastern Question, which more than ever towers above the political horizon.

With regard to English readers, the book, however, calls for a few preliminary words.

It was originally conceived as a purely French book, designed exclusively for the French general public. That unavoidably narrow French frame could include nothing but such instances of French work and French interests in Turkey as would easily appeal to the addressed readers. A French writer would indeed have exceeded the limits both

of competency and of courtesy in assuming to express any views whatever regarding what may be called the English solutions of the Turkish Question. Consequently, regarding the British side of the Ottoman Problem, the only allusion to be found in this book is what is given as an example and an achieved model; the British work of wise and beneficent guardianship in Egypt.

However, what could hardly have found place in the book as originally planned, I am fain to summarise here, the more so as perhaps not every Englishman realises the extent and importance of British work and influence in Turkey. That British work and influence, if of more recent date than the French and, unlike the French, not resulting in a similar atmosphere of English culture and language, has been, especially after the Crimean War and in quite recent days, of great and growing moment. British trade in Turkey goes back to very remote years, and I need only to recall that long before the East India Company became one of the essential factors in the building up of what is now rightly called the British Empire, the "Worshipful Levant Company" was, in British commercial life, an element of great importance and repute. If it finally waned and vanished, it was only after an honourable and sometimes brilliant career, and the practical consequences of its existence are still

alive, and very much so, in the Turkey of to-day. Numerous English families, either of pure British stock or descendants of the French Protestants who sought England as a sanctuary after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, attracted by the possibilities offered by Turkish trade, migrated to, and settled in Turkey, and some of these families are still extant and flourishing; the Lafontaines, the Hayes, the Barkers, the Charnauds, the Whittalls, the Hansons have no other origin, and their names will assuredly be familiar even to those Englishmen who have lived in Turkey but a few months. At Constantinople, Moda and Behek are well known as English centres; the same may be said of the charming suburb of Burnabat, near Smyrna, which is even more exclusively English; the same again of Bujar, close to Smyrna again, but higher up, on the way to Ephesus, which the Turks have called Aya-Suluk. After the Crimean War, under the influence of the eminent man whom the Turks to this day call the Great Ambassador—*Buyuk-Eltchi* — Lord Stratford de Redcliffe — British capital collaborated actively in Turkey. The Ottoman Bank, that stronghold of Western finance in Turkey, is half English, and its head offices are in London. Englishmen again accomplished in Turkey a brilliant and honourable feat, the construction of the only railway that has ever

been built in Turkey without any burden to the State, without any "kilometric guarantee"; I mean the railway of Aïdin, which is the main railway of the great vilayet of Smyrna, Smyrna itself being the terminus. Indeed, even the Haïdar-Pasha-Angora and the Kassaba railways, now in French or German hands, were conceived by British capitalists.

Under the reign of Abdul Hamid, British statesmen and business men experiencing a very natural loathing for the crafty and sanguinary tyrant and the unclean methods of business initiated at Stamboul, British collaboration in Turkey underwent a period of voluntary eclipse. However, even at that date, what may be, I think, called not only the most important but the most successful enterprise in Turkey, the foundation and organisation of the Ottoman Public Debt, was achieved in conjunction with England. From its beginning in 1882 to the end, I mean up to the deplorable day when the blindness and conceit of Enver and his henchmen thrust Turkey into the arms of Germany, over the Ottoman Public Debt has alternately presided, year after year, an English and a French Chairman, and such names as Sir Edgar Vincent (now Lord D'Abernon), Sir Vincent Caillard, Sir Henry Babington Smith and Sir Adam Block will not fail to remain honourably conspicuous in the

economic history of the Turkey that was. After the Turkish revolution of 1908, British collaboration became particularly active. On the advice of the Foreign Office, a purely English bank, the National Bank of Turkey, was instituted at Constantinople and put under the direction of Sir Henry Babington Smith. Although the outbreak of the European War made its existence sadly brief, it had already made itself very popular in Turkey, and begun useful and important work. Two harbours were to be built by it in the Black Sea at points of great importance, Samsoun and Trebizonde, and important works on the coast of the Aegean were purposed, in order to develop the possibilities of cotton growing in Turkey. British work of even greater scope was begun and partially accomplished in Mesopotamia on the plans conceived by a great British engineer, Sir William Willcocks: the restoration of that network of irrigation canals which had made of Mesopotamia the most fertile land on earth, up to the day when the Tartar invasions of the thirteenth century destroyed everything, and left it a marshy, unhealthy, and barren waste. But as regards the basin of the Tigris and the Euphrates, previous English work had been accomplished which greatly redounds to the credit of Great Britain. To the English navy it is due that piracy has totally disappeared from the Persian

Gulf, and it is the merit of British industry to have organised regular and secure steamship intercourse between Basrah and Bagdad.

British collaboration, after 1908, was not limited to economics. Its naval and administrative guidance at once became of the very greatest moment. British naval advisers—Admiral Gamble, later Admiral Lympus—were appointed at the Turkish Admiralty, and given powers for the practical training and the effective command of the Turkish fleet. The Turkish navy was put entirely under the advisory control of those British Admirals and their purely British staff. Indeed, on the eve of the European War, the technical control of all the Turkish naval docks and yards, for thirty years, was given by the Turkish government to two British firms, so that it may be said that both from the military and the practically technical point of view the Turkish navy was handed in trust to Great Britain.

The same predominant position was acquired by Great Britain in those two fundamental Departments of State; the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice. After having been appointed Adviser to the Direction of Turkish Customs, Mr., now Sir Richard Crawford was called to the high and heavy task of Financial Adviser of the Ottoman Government, than whom I do not think I exaggerate in stating that no foreign adviser

became more popular and more respected. At the Ministry of Justice, an English Barrister-at-Law, Mr. Clark, was appointed Inspector-General, with extensive powers, and he equally met with great appreciation and regard. Finally, as I state in the body of the book, at the very heart of domestic policy, the Turkish Home Office, an English Inspector-General again was appointed, Mr. Graves, who had won a well-merited reputation by his long, hard and brilliant work in the British Eastern Consular Service.

I can go further and enter upon a subject which is no longer confidential. The Turks, aware that the Armenian Question had absolutely to be settled by means straight and effective, were desirous of executing the work of Armenian reform under British control. Diplomatic considerations alone prevented the scheme from being carried out. It will be seen in the course of the book that it was also contemplated in Turkey to obtain the consent of Lord Milner to take in hand with full powers the reform and administration of Anatolia.

To complete this brief sketch of the British position in Turkey on the eve of the European War, I should like to add that one of the characteristic features of the scene was the popularity and influence at the Porte of the then British Ambassador, Sir Louis Mallet. He was always a

most welcome visitor at the Grand Vezirate, and the diplomat who could perhaps best contrive to tell the Turkish Ministers unpalatable truths without awakening resentment, so thoroughly were his courtesy, tact and sincerity appreciated. To the last, the Grand Vizier and the Turkish Ministers remained in confidence and sympathy with him, with the exception of Enver naturally, and, towards the end, Talaat and Halîl, when they finally succumbed to the Prussian tempter and played false. A fundamental fact upon which it has not been sufficiently insisted is that, if Enver and the Prussian staff engineered the "coup" of the Black Sea, causing Turkish battleships under German command to bombard Odessa and Novorossyisk, it was because Enver knew very well that, unless he put his country in the presence of a brutal accomplished fact, he could never secure a majority in the Council of Ministers for that war side by side with Germany which he personally certainly willed, and never ceased to will, from the very first day of Germany's declaration of war. Even after the criminal event, the civilian sympathies remained distinctly with Great Britain and France, and to the last the civilians cherished a hope that there would not be a breach with their old friends. On this point the following pages contain a reference. However, it will perhaps not be found irrelevant if I emphasise

here that Prussia, aiming at the domination of the Near East, seized the pretext of the drama of Serayevo to precipitate the European War, not at all because Anglo-French influence was on the wane in Turkey and the Balkans, but, on the contrary, for the reason that the issue of the second Balkan War, so unexpected in Berlin and Vienna, and the rapid and general revival and progress of British and French influence in the Near East led the Kaiser to an impulsive resolve for immediate comminatory action, the case, in his eyes, becoming, for the Austro-Prussians, one of "maintenant ou jamais."

Need I add that the feats of the British leaders and troops in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria —which, to such as know the country, appear as Arabian Nights marvels — crown with an imperishable glamour the work of Great Britain in Turkey? Those modern knights of the Table Round will ever be associated with the wondrous achievement of the emancipation of the Arabs, and worshipful deeds assuredly still remain the most solid basis of legitimate influence. I am confident that the reader will easily supplement all such deficiencies in solutions as may strike him from the British point of view, and for instance, construct, regarding Mesopotamia, a symmetrical replica to what is suggested in the book regarding Syria.

A second objection may be made to this book; it may appear sadly out of date. It was written in 1915, and discusses political situations which have undergone a fundamental change. A pure and simple annexation of Constantinople and the Straits by Russia is now obviously out of the question. On the other hand, the Arab troops of Shereef Hussein having entered Damascus with the contingents of General Allenby after giving valuable assistance in the capture of the Ottoman forces, the rôle of the King of Hidjâz and of his family in the administrative reconstruction of the Arab provinces liberated from Turkish rule will probably become that of a protagonist, instead of being hypothetical and subsidiary as is indicated in a chapter written a long time before anybody dreamt of that capital event in the history of the East; the rising of the Shereef of Mecca against the Turkish Pâdishâh. But here again the reader may be trusted to put readily into focus the lens of the Ottoman kaleidoscope; international instead of Russian guardianship of the Straits;—a dynasty of Arab, probably Shereefian, princes in Damascus.

In truth, if the aspects of the kaleidoscope change, the composing stones of the Turkish mosaic, in colour and proportionate dimensions, remain the same, and those being the unavoidable ethnical and psychological factors to be taken

into account in the planning of any adequate solution of the Turkish Question, a book in which an attempt has been made to give of them an accurate view may perhaps plead for a short extension of existence.

I cannot better terminate than by expressing my sincere gratefulness for the courteous care, the great skill and the literary insight with which Miss Winifred Stephens has written the translation.

PREFACE

THINGS SEEN AND A FEW DEDUCTIONS

The Turkish diversion engineered by Germany imparts to the European conflagration a significance which, we venture to say, no other war has ever possessed. For to the European Question raised by the liquidation of the Austrian Empire it adds the Eastern Question raised by the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire.

Now what precisely is this Turkey whose knell is sounding? As our knowledge of the Arabian East and the Question of the Caliphate is generally limited to impressions derived from The Arabian Nights, *so, except in the case of a few specialists, we depend for our acquaintance with Turkey on Théophile Gautier's famous descriptions and the delightful novels of Pierre Loti. But the time is past for novels and tales, even though they be masterpieces. Turkey, it must not be forgotten, is an immense empire extending from the Black Sea to the Indian Ocean, from the spurs of the*

Persian Plateau to the Mediterranean; the empire of Alexander. Its population numbers more than twenty millions: no amorphous and nameless mass of poor black humanity as in Central Africa, but men of noble races, each with its own history; men of high intellectual and military renown. This is the empire to be liquidated. And it is no small matter. Moreover, it is one with which we are intimately concerned. Direct interests, extending and intertwining from generation to generation through four centuries, have culminated in the creation for us within the Turkish Empire of a moral and material patrimony, the value of which is immense. Beyond these direct interests, so vast an undertaking would raise the issue of other interests indirect but not inconsiderable: matters of sympathy and equilibrium, as well as that concern—in the sweep of its generality so essentially French—that the new order, in the East as everywhere, should be founded upon common sense, justice and generosity, so as to present the only serious guarantee of peace and stability, viz. a determined and methodical advance towards liberty and prosperity, accompanied by a determined and methodical diminution in the sum of human suffering. Here is the question. Herein lies the importance of its national and of its world interest. That it deserves clear thinking, no one will deny. Neither will it be disputed that we shall not be wasting our time,

if, behind the visions of romancers and poets, we endeavour to discern the reality of that Turkey which will soon be the past, but whose past is the inevitable, the only material out of which the future may evolve.

THE TURKISH PROBLEM

I

TURKEY . . . What Frenchman never having left France—the most entirely homogeneous country in the world—could form a correct conception of Turkey?

Vaguely and dimly he recalls his school history lessons; names of vanished kingdoms buzz confusedly in his ears: Pontus, Bithynia, Pergamus, Lydia; more remote Tyre and Sidon; the Bagdad of the Caliphs; the Judæa of Scripture; and especially Byzantium—1453, the great catastrophe, the Emperor Constantine falling on the ramparts, the Turkish conqueror's Janissaries rushing through the breaches into Constantinople becoming Stamboul. He knows that Turkey is necessarily the residuum of all that. But how can reason compete with

the vivid spectacle of everyday happenings? France is the country inhabited by Frenchmen; Turkey is the country inhabited by Turks. Such is the inevitable sequel, the invincible association of images and ideas. A French lady born in Constantinople told me how, when she first went to stay with a friend in Touraine, people in the street stopped and looked at her curiously. She inquired whether there was anything strange or old-fashioned in her attire. "Nothing at all," replied her friend, smiling. "But they know you come from Turkey, and they are interested to see the Turkish woman." Equally unembarrassed by ethnological considerations are our sailors, who voyage to the Levant, simple souls, who, however, in the course of their calling have seen many races and cities. For them Turkey is inhabited by people who wear a fez, or, as they say over there, a "bonnet." And all these "bonnet" wearers the sailor comprehends in the general term *Banabaks*. The word is borrowed from the Turkish boatmen, who, seeking for customers, surge round the boats as they enter Smyrna or Constantinople, endeavouring to attract the traveller's attention by calling out loudly; *Bana bak!*

Bana bak! which in Turkish, means, "Look my way!" Consequently, for our southern sailors the Levant is the Country of the *Banabaks*. And if you were to ask them what are *Banabaks*, they would reply, with disdainful surprise, "Why, of course they are the Turks."

How simple if it were true! So simple that no Turkish question would exist. But, of course, it is not true in the least. The truth lies in the contrary.

An English Ambassador has said that the best way to understand Turkey is to take a daily walk over the Bridge, the Great Bridge over the Golden Horn, uniting Pera and Galata on the right, the town of the embassies and the banks, to Stamboul, on the left, the town of ministries and mosques. Over this bridge from dawn to dark flows a perpetual stream of all who in the Turkish capital are in any way connected with officialdom or with business, that is of the whole population of Constantinople. Observing this ebb and flow of the human tide, one gradually learns to distinguish. At first one discriminates no better than the sailors; on the one hand are fezzes and turbans, on the other hats and caps. And at first among the

former, all equally, as it seems, bronzed, bearded or mustachioed, one is tempted to see nothing but a uniformly oriental type, and to express the difficulty of differentiating by the insufficient but convenient solution: "they are Turks."

Nevertheless, little by little one learns to discriminate, to perceive details. First, in the mass of fez wearers one learns quickly to distinguish Moslems from Christians. In the one there is a certain air, a way of wearing the fez, a something in the countenance haughtier, more impassive, in the other more animation, more vivacity, a difference indefinable, and yet, after a short time, obvious. Then, in the throng of Moslem fez wearers and Christian fez wearers, the glance becoming more and more acute begins to discern clearly families of faces, types of numerous and manifestly different races. Finally the time comes when one may unerringly distinguish at first sight Turk from Arab, Arab from Armenian, Armenian from Greek, Greek from Jew. The Turk, thickset, with a high colour, placid, beginning to be corpulent at forty, sometimes, among the well to do, fair, slender, blue-eyed, with finely moulded hands, bespeaking a Circassian mother. The Arab,

thin, with olive complexion, aquiline nose, dark spare beard and a bright eye, despite Moslem impassibility. The Armenian, now of the "famille noire," with a big Condé nose, beneath a bar of eyebrows dark and heavy, as if outlined with charcoal, hairy hands, the fleece of ebony extending to the fingers and even under the eyes: now of the "famille rose," the same nose on a full face, close shaven save for a thick drooping chestnut mustache, wearing a fez which looks a size too small: and invariably a gleam of subtlety and shrewdness in the eyes. The Greek, brown, dark, or fair, with eyes black, grey, or blue; but whatever the complexion, the countenance invariably animated, eyebrows, hands, arms in constant movement, speech rapid, voice sharp, and in expression, attitude, details of dress, ever something familiar, something European, which always makes the fez look like a disguise when it is worn by Occidentals. The Jew, the classic well-known type, is here generally fair or red-haired, soft-featured, haggard, often with the ritual ringlets, often also with an air of resigned poverty, hollow cheeks and, alas! red nose. . . .

And what a number of other types may not

a practised eye discern on the screen of this cinema! The Persian, the caste of whose countenance recalls an Indian miniature with large black almond-shaped eyes set in a face of regular features, motionless and pale; the Kurd, with Persian eyes and face like an Armenian's of the "famille noire," but with a fixed, hard look uncomfortably suggesting untamed instincts. The Syrian, not unlike the Arab, and yet a different type of Semite, sometimes more massive, sometimes more effeminate, evoking a Phœnician trader or a priest rather than the horseman of the desert. The Circassian, brown-haired, or more generally fair, always tall, trim, graceful, nearly always handsome, with the clear proud features of an Occidental of noble race, but nevertheless with an unmistakable difference, a something more remote, Asiatic.

If I make an end, it is not because the film is exhausted. Many another type might be thrown on to the screen: the rugged stolid faces of the Druses, those Auvergnats of Mount Lebanon; Ismailians, the direct descendants of the Assassins of the Old Man of the Mountain to whom the Sire de Joinville refers; even those Yezidis who are the latest authentic worshippers of the Devil. There are

all kinds in the kaleidoscope. But the few types we have attempted to portray may serve to illustrate a fundamental truth, which hitherto in the vague, unconvincing grisaille of abstraction has too often remained obscure: Turkey is not the country inhabited by Turks: the wearers of the fez do not constitute a homogeneous people called *Banabaks*. Turkey, even more than Austria, is a geographical expression. It is, like the background of every kaleidoscope, a variegated mosaic, a mosaic of races differing more widely from one another than Moscovites from Neapolitans. This truth is fundamental because the whole Turkish question resolves itself into this fact: Turkey is a heterogeneous assemblage of suffering humanity, an ill-adjusted mosaic.

II

BEFORE inquiring why Turkey is, or rather has remained, a mosaic of peoples, we must study these peoples more closely. And for the purpose of our examination we shall find it convenient to proceed from south to north.

The Arabs are 5,500,000. But to these must be added another 5,000,000, if Arabs of independent and of British Arabia are to be included.* They are a Semitic people, whose language is as much like Hebrew as French is like Italian. A good Arabic scholar begins to feel at home in Hebrew in a few months. The Arabs, moreover, are a people very proud of their race; they consider themselves the only thoroughbred men, as they hold their horses for the only thoroughbred horses in the world. They are very proud of their language, which is truly magnificent, of their marvellous history, of their vast literature, and especially of their

* Of course these figures can only be approximate, as is generally the case with statistics everywhere, and in the East always.

divine mission. The finest flower of the Arabian tribes is that Meccan tribe of Qooreysh, to which belonged the Prophet Mohammed, God's Envoy on earth, through whom came the revelation of the Coran, and from which must be elected the Caliphs, successors of the Envoy of God.

The Arabs inhabit a vast territory. It includes not merely the Arabian peninsula, but, on the left, Palestine and Syria, in the centre the great desert between Damascus and Bagdad, on the right the Iranian Plateau and Mesopotamia, *i.e.* the provinces or Turkish *vilayets* of the Yemen, the Hidjaz, Beyrouth, Damascus (including the district or *sandjak* of Jerusalem), of Aleppo, Basrah, Bagdad, Mossoul, with the *sandjak* of Zor.

The genius of the Arab race would seem to have been extinguished in the Middle Ages by the terrific bloodsheds first of Djenghiz-Hân and then of Timour-Lenk. No art, nor science, nor even original literature have been produced by any Arab country since the fifteenth century. Nevertheless the race has remained intelligent, refined, courteous, very capable, when not blinded by fanaticism, of assimilating western knowledge. So completely has it retained its prestige that despite

the fall, long, long ago, of the Arabian Caliphate, its language still preponderates in Syria, in Palestine, in Mesopotamia; and in these lands even Christians loudly proclaim themselves Arabs when questioned as to their nationality. The sedentary Moslem Arabs are either landowners, or farmers, or merchants in the towns. The Nomad Arabs, or Bedouins, encamp in the desert, and live by breeding horses, camels, and occasionally sheep. They supplement these resources by booty taken from other tribes or caravans in expeditions, which they themselves regard not in the least as brigandage, but rather as the exercise of a regularly recognised right of private warfare. Among the non-Moslem Arabs are a large number of agriculturists, but more are business men, bankers and members of the liberal professions. In the Arab countries almost all the doctors are Jews or Christians.

Of Armenians there are 1,500,000 in the Turkish Empire. They are an Aryan people, that is to say, belonging to the same primitive stock as all the great European nations, French, British, Russians, etc. The Armenian language naturally, therefore, belongs to the family of idioms spoken in Europe,

although, it must be admitted, one must needs be a scholar to discern the relationship. To the lay European ear it sounds extremely foreign, and, we must confess, not very harmonious. The Armenians rightly regard themselves as a people of old and high nobility. They know very well that as far back as pagan days, there existed a kingdom of Armenia, some of whose sovereigns played a very prominent part in history. They recollect that Byzantium knew great captains, even emperors of Armenian blood. There exist a very ancient Armenian literature and admirable Armenian popular music. Of all this they are well aware and extremely proud.

Armenians are to be found in every part of the Turkish Empire. The capital and its environs alone contain 200,000: bankers, business men, lawyers, doctors; generally rich or well to do, and all reputed to be acutely intelligent. Nevertheless the mass of the nation are peasants. For the most part they inhabit an Alpine country, of snowy peaks, sombre forests, green meadows, lakes and torrents extending diagonally from Mount Ararat, on the north-east, near the Russian frontier, to Adana, near the Mediterranean,

on the south-west, This includes what are known as Great and Little Armenia, *i.e.* the *vilayets* of Erzeroum, Bitlis, Van, Trebizond, Harpout, Diarbekir and Adana, as well as the *sandjaks* of Ourfa and Marach.

The Kurds number 2,000,000. They are a people of Aryan race, speaking a language of their own belonging to the Persian stock.

They, again, are a very ancient people, but whose reputation does not equal their antiquity. Five centuries before our era, Xenophon, on his way home with his Ten Thousand, made their acquaintance, and he refers to them in no affectionate terms. To-day the great among them are a species of feudal barons, living in mountain strongholds, and imposing upon the Armenian agriculturists of the lowlands an exacting and costly protection, ferocious if rejected. The humbler folk are openly highway brigands, or shepherds, or porters in the towns of the sea-coast. Though Kurds may be found everywhere throughout Turkey in Asia, their chief home remains where it was in Xenophon's day: the vast mountainous region extending between Armenia and Mesopotamia.

Of Greeks there are 1,500,000 without

reckoning those of Constantinople, of whom I shall write later.

There is no need to explain who the Greeks are. Every one knows this prestigious people and the historical phenomenon so happily called the "Greek Miracle." They have preserved all the ancient traditions of their race, as most marvellously they have preserved its language; for only those who know nothing of modern Greek will maintain that it is not in substance the classic tongue. Occasionally the Greek is an agriculturist, and when he tills the soil he does it well, but he prefers trading by sea. Consequently a fringe of Greek population is to be found all along the southern shore of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, the Dardanelles, and the Mediterranean, up to the point where the Greek finds himself arrested by his Syrian rival who is the heir of the Phœnicians. Moreover, the Greek is almost as much of a townsman as a mariner. Banker, trader, lawyer, doctor, he competes with and frequently surpasses the Armenian. At Constantinople the only great native banks are Greek. Finally, owing to his inclination and gift for the retail sale of spirits and colonial products, well-nigh every grocer (or *bakkal*,

to use a more technical and high-flown term) in the Ottoman Empire, that is, in the Turkish Orient, is a Greek.

Of Jews there are 200,000. They are nearly all immigrants, or the descendants of immigrants: from Spain, in Constantinople and Smyrna; from Russia and Roumania, in Palestine; ancient exiles from Jerusalem, in Bagdad.

Turkish Jews in no way resemble the magnificos of Frankfort. A few, skilled in medicine or the law, attain wealth and influence; but the majority are humble folk, engaged in small businesses, or very modest manual labour, boatmen, porters, and so forth. In Palestine, they have tried agriculture and with success. In Turkey the Jews speak Spanish, except in the Arabian provinces, where they talk Arabic like every one else.

Now to resume. In this Turkey, six centuries old, there are five non-Turkish races: two Semitic—Arabs and Jews; three Aryan—Greeks, Armenians and Kurds. Between these respective non-Turkish races, and between them and the conquering race which has governed them for so long, there has been no kind of fusion. They have remained

as impermeable one to the other as if they had been enclosed in water-tight compartments. They hardly understand one another. Up to the limits where the Arabian Provinces begin, the Turkish language, indifferently known and still more indifferently pronounced, a kind of "pigeon Turkish," more or less helps, I would not say as a factor of union, but as some means of elementary verbal intercourse. Beyond these limits, nothing but Arabic is understood. The immense majority of Arabs, whether Moslems or Christians, are totally ignorant of the Turkish tongue. Perhaps it may be to the purpose to recall here that Turkish and Arabic are two languages essentially different, as little alike as for instance, French and the "Malgash" tongue of Madagascar.

Further, these races do not like each other. At the bottom of his heart, the Arab considers himself as above all that is not himself, as the only thoroughbred man, a favourite with God. The Greek, in race and intelligence, is persuaded of his infinite priority. The Armenian has no doubt that he alone is really clever. The Kurd regards his neighbours with the fine contempt that the robber baron of the Rhine had for the trading rabble that

he looted. The Jew thinks of Abraham, Moses, and David, and does not dream of condescending to compare himself with any one. And all these races detest the Turk, with the exception of the Jews, who have not suffered from him. Arabs, Armenians, Greeks regard him as a malevolent barbarian. Even the Kurds, whom he subjected by pitiless massacres, loathe him as a ferocious competitor. And the Turks meet this concert of hatred with the serenity of the coolest disdain.

Here indeed is a well-cemented mosaic! And why?

Moslem law and Turkish psychology will afford the explanation.

III

I SHALL surprise a good many readers when I assert that the faith of Islam is not a fanatical religion, if by fanaticism be understood an ardent desire to proselytise, joined to an irresistible impulse to persecute, to annihilate those who persist in refusing to open their eyes to what is believed to be the true light. Moslem history might be searched in vain for anything like the Albigensian Crusade, for institutions even remotely suggesting that of the Inquisition and the autos-da-fe. Islam is not fanatical, it is proud. The Moslem's attitude towards his Christian subject is not unlike that of the French nobleman of the old régime towards a "roturier," an attitude precisely and naïvely described by Saint Simon in his *Memoirs*, where, desiring to praise a plebeian, he always begins by calling him "respectful." Like the nobility of old time, Moslems still say: "We are porcelain, the others are rough clay," a feeling which

completely excludes the idea of inciting the rough clay to transmutation into porcelain. True, when a Christian is converted to Mohammedanism, there is a semblance of rejoicing, the sheep returning to the fold is officially caressed. But in reality he is looked down upon with some such smile as the one we have for the bourgeois who purchases the title of a papal count.

Those feelings have their source in the Islamic conception of life and the world. Imagine an immense Order of Chivalry, a thousand times greater than that of the Temple or Malta, that were infinitely ambitious and perfectly tolerant—and imagine the Caliph as Grand Master: there you have Islam. No geographical conception of a national home: the world is divided into two parts, the frontiers and extent of which vary indefinitely: the Land of Islam, where the Order has its commanderies, and on the authority of its Grand Master imposes the Law of Allah; and the Land of War, wherein reigns the Law of the Unbelievers, who must be fought.

The basis of Mohammedan public law is a Code of War, the earliest systematic and complete Code of War ever elaborated, and

moreover a very chivalrous one. When war is declared, even if it is occasioned by the enemy's treacherous aggression, all the enemy's subjects in the land must be free to depart; further, in order to make sure that they shall not be molested, women and children must be escorted to the frontier. During military operations, it is forbidden to touch women, children, the aged, priests, and also such men of trade, handicraft or menial service as have no fighting capacity. The most important treatise on Mohammedan public law cites the following incident as a precedent (for, like English common law, Moslem law is a law of precedents). One day a companion of the Prophet was fighting with Mohammed's own sword, which the Prophet had entrusted to him as a reward for his valour. Having overthrown an extremely courageous adversary who fought with lowered visor, he was about to thrust him through with his sword, when the vanquished uttered a piercing cry, and he recognised a woman's voice. "And," he exclaimed, "praised be Allah, I was able to stop in time and thus to save the Prophet's sword from the disgrace of striking a woman."

Moslem law nowhere enjoins the knighthood

of Allah to exterminate Unbelievers who refuse to be converted. It insists on their being given the choice between Islam and the payment of taxes "in all humility." If they pay taxes and behave "respectfully," like Saint Simon's good "roturier," not merely their lives, their honour, and their possessions, but their religion and even language must be respected equally with those of Moslems. The main difference shall consist in their disability to bear arms and to rise to posts of civil or military command, or any dignity which might involve the exercise of compulsory authority over Moslems. For a famous verse of the Coran runs: "Allah will not set Unbelievers over Believers."

One can easily imagine the practical consequences involved in this system of haughty tolerance: the division of the population into two classes: those who fight and command, and those who work: those who pay taxes, and those who live on them. Moslem law, I hasten to say, constrains the Faithful also to pay taxes, but mark the difference: taxés paid by the Believer are defined as a purification, and form a kind of poor rate destined to relieve poverty; taxes

paid by the Unbeliever are considered as a "fine," a punishment for Unbelief. They are destined to maintain the military power of Islam, and to pay the salaries, literally the "living," due to the Faithful who serve Islam on the battle-field with their sword, or in the office with their writing-reed.

Moslem conquest everywhere—subject to the variations involved by the special genius of each conquering race—was a faithful application of these theories, elaborated by the jurisconsults of Bagdad about the time of Charlemagne.

None could be more acceptable to the psychology of the Turkish people, of whom it now behoves to speak.

IV

THE Turks number some eight millions. They are a people of Tartar origin, but so profoundly modified by intermarriage with other races, or the influence of environment, that the primitive type, seen in Turkestan —sallow complexion, spare beard, and slanting slits of eyes—has completely disappeared.

They still speak a Tartar language, pleasant to the ear, and even quite attractive when spoken by women, of a grammar geometrically regular, but of a construction of sentences and formation of words, especially of verbs, appalling to Aryan or Semitic minds, so prodigiously apart are they from anything we conceive. Two examples occur to me: the phrase: "It looks as if they would not come," would be rendered in Turkish by *one* word; the phrase: "I fear you will be unable to understand," by *two* words. As it is said in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Turkish is truly "a fine language, expressing many things in

few words." And we may be sure that Molière, when he penned that famous passage, was inspired by some King's Interpreter of Oriental Languages, although there is not in it a single word of authentic Turkish.

This horribly difficult language is poor to a singular and characteristic degree. It lacks terms for the expression of what cannot be seen or touched, of abstract and general ideas. Words such as "administration," "finance," "justice," or simply "time," "hour," "minute," do not exist in Turkish. The deficiency is remedied by the process of borrowing administrative and scientific terms from Arabic, and the poetical vocabulary from Persian. Hence a Turkish document resembles a piece of tapestry, in which only the web is Turkish, the coloured wools and silks being Arabic or Persian.

Finally, Turkish possesses a phraseology of a peculiar politeness. A Turkish friend of twenty years' standing whom you would try to help on with his great coat, would answer most naturally: "Mercy, my lord, do not command the confusion of your slave." In Turkish you do not say "Come in," but "Command"; "I beg your pardon," but "Command"; "Give me a light," but

"Command the bounty of a match." The verb to command forms the warp and woof of polite language.

If I have dwelt at length on the Turkish language, it is because it is typical of the race, which it faithfully reflects; a race of very distant and very simple soul, presenting qualities which attract, side by side with deficiencies which amaze, and which truly terrify when unconsciousness of those deficiencies determines most fatal incomprehensions with, as a consequence, horrible bloodsheds.

Léon Cahun, the author of delightful historical novels * about Mongols and Turks, though he did not understand their language, possessed an intuition which enabled him to paint the Turkish soul to the life. He represents it as in the main the soul of a born soldier, not of the soldier by patriotic duty of our day, artisan, shopkeeper, or professor, who dons the uniform and goes forth to risk his life because national honour and public safety demand it, but of the professional soldier of long ago, who for the love of fighting

* *La Bannière Bleue, la Tueuse*, and *Hassan le Janissaire*, for example, which, in the last years of the nineteenth century, took Paris by storm.

enlisted at sixteen, passed his life in camp or in barracks, and died on the field of battle or in the Invalides,* having never known any social organisation outside that of barracks, any ethics beyond military discipline, any aspirations save those of the soldier on active service or on leave.

The Turks possess complete military courage, that inborn, unconscious and splendid pluck which causes men to march on to the firing line with quiet heart and elastic stride, not the least thought being given to the possibilities of pain and death. He has the soldier's good nature, cordiality, generous impulse to hospitality, and also that sort of child-like candour which keeps the trusting and transparent soul of a Saint-Cyr † cadet to many three-starred "swells." ‡ The peasants and the few Turks in business are of an old-world uprightness and sincerity. Finally, Turkish politeness is of that military type, precise and grave, which makes

* The beautiful pensioners' home instituted by Louis XIV., and which forms to the present day one of the conspicuous ornaments of Paris.

† Saint-Cyr (not far from Versailles) is the French Military College, equivalent of Sandhurst.

‡ Three stars are the French indication of the rank of Lieutenant-General.

the youngest face wooden in the act of saluting.

The Turk, like most professional soldiers, is neither an intellectual nor a business man. He inks a great deal of paper, but merely in compliance with the necessities of red-tape, and the idea of a Bank instituted and managed by Turks seems as ludicrous as would be that of Porthos of "Three Musketeers" fame becoming a Director of the Bank of France.

The Turks first appeared in history as Mercenaries, and excellent Mercenaries withal, steady and of perfect discipline: as in the dawn of his history, the Turk religiously believes in loyalty to the chief, of whom he eats the bread, and this is even his principal religion. For him, as for the professional trooper, the criterion of good or evil is simple: it is what is commanded or forbidden by the chiefs. And similarly, the unpardonable sin, the sin against the spirit, is hesitation in executing an order, or the questioning of that order, for this constitutes, morally, the "bad spirit"* and practically the "denial of

* Bad spirit and denial of obedience are poor substitutes for the French expressions "mauvais esprit" and "refus d'obéissance," French military terms of particularly strong purport.

obedience," things punishable by the most severe penalties. The criterion of human value and of the regard due to it is again very simple: it is the military rank, or the civil rank assimilated to the military; there exists no other social scale in Turkey; aristocracy of birth, in particular, is totally unknown.

The Turk is abstemious, but, again like the professional soldier, from necessity, not temperamentally or on principle. The soldier, if necessary, will live without a murmur on mildewed biscuits and uncooked vegetables, and he will drink stagnant water. But once the town is taken, if his chiefs shut their eyes to it, he will empty larders and cellars and be over-gallant with the ladies. In like manner, the poor Turkish peasant, a teetotaller and vegetarian, is a very model of abstemiousness, but the Turk who can afford it is, as a rule, a big eater, a heavy drinker, and a relentless rake. Many of the Sultans were drunkards. The famous Janissaries drank like fish. Too often, also, as a bad, dishonest sergeant who would go in collusion with the meat contractor, the Turk is a corrupt official. Abdul Hamid's régime corrupted thousands. Generally only four months of

their year's salary was paid: and everything was winked at under the one condition of loyalty to the august master.

Finally, the ethics characteristic of the professional trooper can be instrumental in making him naïvely accomplish terrible things. When Carrier was sending to be drowned the wives and the children of the Vendée peasantry, soldiers hedged round the prisons of Nantes. They were not bad men at all; the victims noticed the agonised expression on their faces. Nevertheless they remained in a row, ready to prevent the flight of the condemned: Commanded service! * The Turk, and especially the Turkish peasant, is, temperamentally, as placid and docile as the great black buffaloes of Anatolia, but when the Greeks, in 1821, and the Armenians, in 1896, were accused by the great chiefs as guilty of rebellion and understanding with the enemy, those same Turks decimated them in a most horrible manner.

* Again a French military expression: Service commandé.

To such souls, Islam, as they understood it, must have appeared admirable.

Does not every people tend to make of religion, according to its especial genius, what it would that religion should be? In Islam, the artistic, sensual, and mystic Persian found material for poetic developments of the metaphysics of love; the logical, hair-splitting Arab for the composition of an immense library of theological controversy and jurisprudence. The Turk, as a born soldier, saw in it the religion of the perfect trooper: life, a long campaign, with its hardships and the ecstasies of triumph; Paradise, an everlasting leave in a marvellous harem: shaded gardens, cool streams, and the love of peerless maidens;—the certainty of Paradise whatever you may do, provided you are a good soldier and a good Believer. And as obedience to the commissioned chief

constitutes being a good soldier, so obedience to the turbaned chief constitutes being a good Believer. For religious ethics are obviously of a military conception: the Good and the Beautiful are what is "commanded"; the Wrong and the Ugly what is "forbidden." An infinite intermediary series constitutes the things allowed. For instance, wine is forbidden, but brandy flavoured with the resin of the mastic tree, the so-called *rakee*, is not forbidden: therefore it is allowed, which is delightful. Religion, therefore, is a kind of additional military discipline, easy to understand and acceptable. It demands no mental effort, no fatigue. In Turkish Islam there has long ceased to exist that most important privilege of pure primitive Islam, the right of examination, of meditation upon and personal interpretation of the sacred texts. Now, one does not discuss, one obeys the turbaned *hodja*,* and the *hodja* in his turn

* *Hodja* is a generic term for the numerous class of the Turkish population having studied in the religious schools and wearing a turban. From among them are recruited the doctors of theology and Mohammedan law, or *ulemas*, the judges of Courts of Mohammedan law, or *qâdhis*, and the leaders of the prayers in the mosques, or *imâms*.

has renounced thinking, in order to become the blind devoted slave of ancient precedents. Nor is there, in the practice of this religion, anything to require mental effort: it is nothing but a daily repetition of the same bowings and kneelings, always the same, accompanied by a few short phrases, always the same, in a tongue which is not understood, but accepted as sacred.* By submission to such tenets and practices one becomes that peerless being, the Mercenary of God on earth, the Soldier by right divine, a King in the midst of the herd of Unbelievers, hopeless Civilians, irremediable "Shirkers."

Finally, is not the simplicity with which Islam organises the countries she conquers essentially military? Once inside the captured town, one says to the inhabitants: "Steady all! Go on working, praying, doing whatever you choose, as long as you keep quiet, pay the taxes, and salute the chiefs." It is very simple; and it is very exactly what happened in 1453, when Mohammed II. entered Constantinople. In the fury of

* All Muslim prayers are in Arabic, whereas not one Turk in a hundred thousand—including the *imâms* who direct the public prayers in the mosques—understands that language.

the storming, the Greek Patriarch, leader of the Nation after the Emperor, had been put to the sword. The Sultan at once had another one elected, reassured him, invited him to continue to exercise freely his authority, and, as a matter of fact, treated him infinitely better than the German *Kommandantur* treats Cardinal Mercier. And everything went on very well, until 1821. Then the Greeks revolted, and the Patriarch was hanged. It is extremely simple.

VI

WHAT happened on a large scale at Constantinople happened on a smaller scale everywhere else. It is only in Anatolia, whither the Turkish immigration had originally been directed, and where the Turkish power had been built up, that the Turk has definitely established himself and become a people of soldier peasants. Down to the present day the compact nucleus of the race is there, in the vast peninsula bordered on the north by the Black Sea and the Straits, on the west and south by the Mediterranean, and on the east by a line that might be drawn straight down from Samsoun to the Mediterranean. Within these limits the Turks number five millions out of a total population of six. They have also overflown, in compact groups, into Great and Little Armenia, numbering two millions out of a total of five million inhabitants. Throughout the vast extent of the remainder of Asiatic

Turkey, the conqueror was content to establish commanderies: at every point commercially or strategically important, a garrison and a few Turkish officials, both officers and civil servants keeping to themselves, ignoring the native language, the inhabitants, their religion, their civil status, schools, hospitals, and even legislation and justice as far as family rights were concerned, requiring only three things—taxes, respect, and not to be addressed but in Turkish.

Conquest of any form is a species of exploitation of man by man, but there are *nuances* in the practice. This one, notwithstanding the undeniable tolerance it involves, is one of the most insupportable. A commandery which is content to be nothing else, which remains merely an establishment for governing a conquered country without seeking either to assimilate the conquered to itself, as did the Romans in Gaul, or to assimilate itself to the conquered, as did the Normans in England, can never be loved, not even when it is industrious, wise and kind; for to the subject people, left intact but humiliated, the conqueror will ever personify that most painful and hurtful thing, foreign domination by sheer force. In such

conditions the slightest wavering on the conqueror's part provokes insurrection. A powerful and terrible spirit, Sultan Selim, father of Soliman the Magnificent,* gazing out into the future, discerned this danger and thought to dispel it at a blow by one despotic ordinance. He conceived the design of welding into one people, speaking one language, all the inhabitants of Turkey. To Jews and Christians he would offer the alternative of Islam or the sword; and he would insist on the adoption and exclusive use of Arabic. No power in the world was capable of opposing such a design by force. But in all honour, the *hodjas* offered a moral resistance which proved invincible. In sacred law, they declared, such a design was to be qualified as "forbidden." The Sultan dared not proceed. Eastern Christendom was saved by Moslem law; and events pursued their fatal course.

Turkish provincial administration devoted little care to attempting even so much as to delay it. As a general rule, the conqueror's commanderies were anything but kind, wise, and industrious. It would be an error or an untruth to represent all the governors of

* Born 1495, died 1566.

Turkish provinces as men of low standard, or as ignorant and inefficient troopers. Turkey has known provincial administrators zealous and honourable, with a high sense of duty and dignity. To go no further back, the memory is yet green of Midhat, Ahmed Vefiq, Hussein Hilmi. But those were, no doubt, exceptions, at any rate from the time of Sultan Abdul Hamid. Ever since the beginning of his reign at least, races far less intelligent than Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians must necessarily have been alienated by the blind egoism and the incredible carelessness of the Turkish provincial administration.

At the commandery there was good cheer. The Pasha purchased beautiful Circassian girls for his harem, fine Arab steeds for his stables, gaily hued Persian carpets to serve as rugs for his palace, the Turkish *konak*. At sunset, he gathered his faithful colleagues round an immense tray of chased copper, loaded with *hors-d'œuvre*, with decanters of *rakee*, and pyramids of cigarettes. Then there was prodigious drinking and smoking. Three or four times the tray was carried off and brought back laden with refilled decanters and dishes. At length his Excellency would clap his hands and call out "Dinner!" Ten

or twelve courses, then sweets, the rich and terribly sugared sweets of the East; finally, coffee without sugar, cigarettes again, and the party was ripe for the harem. The next day, no early rising, as may be imagined. In the afternoon, two or three hours devoted to shuffling through business and then, the sun setting to rest, a return to the revelry. Meanwhile roads were getting out of repair, bridges were falling to pieces, harbours were becoming silted up, offices and law-courts open to the public were growing horribly dirty and odoriferous: no attempt was made even to mend broken windows. That rich Asia in which Proconsuls used to make their fortune in a year, at the same time building temples, constructing aqueducts, baths, and theatres and contributing millions to the treasury of the Senate and the Roman people, was now covered with ruins and uncultivated fields.

Such a state of affairs did not trouble the commandery. If their attention were drawn to it, they replied in a cheerful off-hand way that it was no affair of theirs, that they had no instructions, that their business was to collect taxes and to keep order.

And as long as the taxes came in and order

was preserved, the Pasha continued to be lenient. A veneer of majestic cordiality concealed the porcelain and coarse clay view * which nevertheless persisted. For every comer, even the poorest, there was an open door, a table spread and rapture for whomsoever was vigorous enough to face the hour of *rakee*. Even if taxes did not come in, provided that Stamboul was not clamouring for money, good humour continued, and for any delay resulting from mere negligence there was complete indulgence. Not unknown in Turkey are arrears of ten or twenty years. But once there arose any discussion, any resentment, any impertinent desire to know what had become of those taxes, not a farthing of which benefited the tax-payers, then suddenly the old Tartar blood rushed to the surface in a display of autocracy and military discipline. To compromise with any recalcitrancy on the part of the "coarse clay" section of the population was unthinkable. Refusal to obey! that meant gendarmes, confinement, and rough handling. If in addition there happened to be the slightest suspicion of a tendency to independence, any hope in foreign support, then

* See *ante*, p. 17.

things became very bad indeed. "What then!" conceived the Turkish brain; "Rebellion! Understanding with the enemy!" Then would follow the garrison on the march, command to fire, often immediate and pitiless repression, executions *en masse*, or, as we should say, massacres. And no distinction would be made between different religions: administrative attentions were showered on all alike; the "coarse clay" classification had come to be applied to all taxpayers, to Believers as well as Unbelievers. Arabs and Druses know something of this. Later I shall write of the Turkish peasants, they are, perhaps, the most to be pitied.

It may be argued that the foregoing description portrays an exceptional case. And that may be true; the extreme of evil, as of good, is always exceptional. But with a little less "*rakee*" and a little more intelligence, accompanied often by a vague realisation of the responsibilities of power, by a desire here and there to do something, to plan a road, to get rid of officials too obviously corrupt or incapable, a desire merely, and rarely attaining to the persistence of a resolution, such, on the eve of the Revolution of 1908, was the attitude for the most part of

the Turkish commandery when it was left to itself. I do not think that any one knowing the Turkey of those days would contest such a statement. Henceforth, therefore, the question becomes, not why is Turkey an ill-constructed mosaic, but by what chance has a mosaic which is so badly cemented contrived to hold together so long. To answer this question we must consider the central authority, whose tendency has long been, if not to correct, at least to gloss over the vices of the system. For us such a consideration is all the more important because it is at this point that we French begin to be concerned.

VII

"THE first to be king was a successful soldier." It is a witty saying; but if the great man who coined it will give us leave to say so, the saying does not happen to be true. Murat was an eminently successful soldier: for over fifteen years, he kept on throwing down, with winning hand, victorious nines in the *baccara* of death. When he tried his hand at the trade of king he got miserably shot. Rather would we say: "The first to be king was a cunning soldier." Enthusiasts win battles, calculators benefit by them. The following was the main calculation of the Turkish chieftains, who succeeded in founding a great empire and in maintaining the sovereign power in their family during six centuries, an achievement of which there is no example that the brains of an average captain of free lancers was ever capable.

Certain races are complete. The Greeks

defeated the barbarians at Salamis. Among the combatants was a wonderful artist who made the Persian defeat the subject of an inimitable tragedy. The Romans combined unsurpassed military gifts with legislative genius and practical business ability. The virtuous Brutus, of whom so many "Purs" were proud to assume the name in the mythological times of the "An Deux," * was the shrewdest of money lenders. Other races are less favoured by the gods. Either there is a hole in their brains, or possibly capacities slumbering in such lethargy that in their place appears nothing but the blackest vacuum. The merchants of Carthage, the citizens of Florence and of Pisa, even the patricians of the Venetian Golden Book possessed to the highest degree business faculty as well as diplomatic tact and discretion. Only a very few of them, however, were endowed with military ability. That was a want which had to be provided for. They hired mercenary soldiers and directed battles which others fought. The Turkish

* The "An Deux" is the second year of the first French Revolution, *i.e.* 1794, and "Purs" was the appellation given to the fanatical, uncompromising members of the Convention.

sultans, ruling over a race of troopers, represent a complete *élite* in the midst of an immense majority of the onesided. Those princes of the Osman dynasty were often impossible beings. Some, as we have said, were drunkards, others frenzied debauchees, others again incurable sluggards. But such blemishes are common to every long-lived family, with a well-known history extending through several centuries. Abdul-Hamid notably is a monstrosity in the family, the ill-fated child of whom mention is avoided in the presence of strangers. But generally the sultans were not merely brave—that is inevitable in the Turkish race—but they were intellectual and artistic. The history of Turkey presents a dramatic picture of the struggle of their intelligence against the stupid and brutal selfishness of the troopers and the stubborn and blind bigotry of the *hodjas*.* Mahomet II.,† the conqueror, ignoring the Moslem law against any representation of the human countenance, summoned the Bonnat of those days, the Venetian Bellini, to paint his portrait. The picture still exists. Consider that pale face, that delicate arched nose, the curve of those fine

* See p. 30, note. † Born 1430, died 1481.

eyebrows over dark almond-shaped eyes, and say whether they are the sodden features of some commander of swashbucklers. Even the terrible Selim,* to whom I have already referred, was a gifted and fastidious writer, the author of excellent poems in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. Only those who have visited the beautiful harem of the Old Seraglio at Stamboul can have any idea of the delightful harmony of the tiles, the amazing and entrancing wood carving which the exquisite taste of the sultans commanded for their favourites.

Those Sforzas, amongst the herd of common Mercenaries, made a true appreciation of their subjects. They by no means constituted the only *élite* of the race. Here and there in the commanderies was to be found some glittering intelligence which they were prompt to appropriate. But they had no illusions: they knew that their Turks, perfect when it was a question of hitting hard or standing punishment, were mediocrity itself when the task was not to destroy but to construct. As the Turkish scholar is driven by the poverty of his language to borrow from Arabic or Persian the indispensable

* P. 35.

abstract terms which Turkish lacks, so the Turkish sultans borrowed from abroad the equally indispensable abstract brains in which their own people were wanting. Thus they remedied their ethnical defects in the manner of Florentine, Venetian, and Carthaginian statesmen, but in an opposite sense. Not the military but the civil bump was absent from the Turkish skull. The sultans, therefore, hired civilian mercenaries.

First of all—though themselves "porcelain" of the finest, haughty to the last degree, but still more intelligent—the sultans summoned to their aid the "coarse clay."* The Divan became filled with Greeks and Armenians. The Greeks were employed in diplomacy, civil administration and the fine arts; the Armenians in finance, and later in the fine arts also. A Greek, whose origin is too often concealed by his Turkish name of Kodja Sinân, constructed aqueducts, hammams and countless mosques, among which are the finest in Turkey: the Suleimaniyeh at Constantinople and the Selimiyeh at Adrianople. In diplomacy and administration so brilliantly did the Greeks distinguish themselves that the Grand Turks

* See p. 17.

raised them to the highest offices. The Greeks of the Phanar, the ancient Byzantium of Stamboul, founded a princely dynasty in Moldavia and Wallachia—the Roumania of to-day—where they ruled as hospodars.* The princely coronet of the Ypsilantis, the Ghikas and so many other Greek or Roumanian families has no other origin. The Armenians displayed less eminent artistic genius. The palaces they built hardly bear comparison with Kodja Sinân's constructions. But in the administration of the public estates, as well as those of the Sultan himself and of other dignitaries, they displayed such skill that they were able to build up princely fortunes, while at the same time never neglecting the interests of their masters. Hence until quite recently the Armenian nation was known in Turkey as "the loyal nation."

Thus a very real Turkish *élite*—to those who have leisure to look through any Turkish history I need only recall the names of the Kieuprulu, the Mehemmed Râghib and many others—superintended the work of the provincial commanderies, sent instructions with the object of counteracting sloth and carelessness, deposed incorrigible pashas, and,

* Vassal princes.

when they were troublesome, in the good old times, simply had them strangled. In the more delicate and private departments of civil administration, the Christian *élite* made good the Turkish deficiencies in disposition and capacity. But the policy of the Sultans was not confined to employing Christians in business, very much as Louis XIV. employed the bourgeois. Looking beyond the limits of their empire, the Turkish rulers sought everywhere to enlist their indispensable civilian mercenaries. They even looked out into that distant and for them so utterly foreign region of western Christendom. The first western kingdom with which they entered into communication was France. "Conversations" took place between Francis I. and Soliman the Magnificent.* And henceforward, between France and Turkey, began a collaboration which persisted, through centuries, down to a most recent period, indeed down to that

* The earliest dealings between France and Turkey were in 1507, when Bajazet granted what was known as *La Trève Marchande*. In 1528 and 1530 Francis I. sent an ambassador Rinçon to the Porte. By the famous *Capitulations* of 1535, the Levant was opened to French merchant ships, and to the ships of other nations flying the French flag. By this treaty also France enjoyed other privileges in Turkey.

fatal 29th of October, 1914, when Turkey, through a last triumph of blind troopers, was induced to enter into a foolish and fatal game of diversion and turn against her oldest friends.

VIII *

THE rôle and position of France in Turkey is wholly summed up by these important words: immense services and primary influence. I employ the word "primary" advisedly. And let those who think of Germany have patience. Germany's slight though fatal part will be described later. The French were, before all, the honest and useful intellectual mercenaries; loyal of course, and of much greater moment in civil affairs than were the Swiss or the Scotch mercenaries in things military, for whereas the latter simply defended, the French created.

The first creation of France in Turkey was a commerce of exports and imports. Such commerce, it is true, had been carried on successfully before the fall of Byzantium by the Genoese of Galata and the Venetians

* Those English readers who might find this chapter somewhat one-sided in favour of France are referred to the introduction, where all due explanation is given.

of the Golden Horn; but since 1453 it had languished and was now (1535) on the point of extinction. By the famous *Capitulations*, the great and wise Soliman the Magnificent granted immunity from the jurisdiction and a thousand guarantees against the autocracy of his raw troopers to the "Frankish merchants" and to all such as, flying the banner of the "Emperor of France", should navigate in Ottoman waters. Straightway on the Turkish coast there began to appear counters and warehouses, chiefly French, the commencement of an incredible exchange of wealth between East and West. France was rewarded for her services. Marseilles completely dethroned Genoa and Venice. Henceforth French was spoken in every Turkish port.

Next France created in Turkey a system of public education.

At first it was done by means of the religious orders. The same immunities Soliman had granted to the merchants he bestowed on all Catholic priests, monks and pilgrims, whose protector he recognised to be "the Emperor of France."

Priests and monks from France flocked over in large numbers and made not proselytes

—the Moslem is never converted—but pupils who learned and spoke French.

Later this movement widened in a remarkable manner. France created in Turkey not merely modern secondary education, but also partly higher education. The only Ottoman government *lycée* which has a complete methodical cycle of studies, bringing the pupil up to a final examination equivalent to that of *bachelier-ès-lettres*, is, at Constantinople, the Lycée of Galata Sérail, founded on the advice and with the official assistance of the French government. Here, down to the present day, French professors have taught in French. In this *lycée*, for the pupils who had obtained their secondary teaching diploma, was instituted one branch at least of higher education: that of law. These excellent lectures, in French naturally, were only abandoned when the Ottoman government, incited by this example, founded at Stamboul a Turkish Law School modelled on that of Paris.

As for French medical education, that has never ceased. At Beyrouth the French Jesuits founded a medical school, which, through the collaboration of teachers selected in France with the most intelligent discrimination, remains, despite a later inauguration

of the Ottoman Government's official medical school at Constantinople, the best college of medicine in the Turkish Orient.

France also introduced military science into Turkey.

When the Sultans perceived that the military profession had its intellectual side and required for complete success a mental effort equal if not superior to the muscular, once again they appealed to French brains to supply the necessary abstraction. As far back as the reign of Louis XV., Bonneval,* that valiant and gifted adventurer, inaugurated the reform of the Turkish army and the creation of a modern navy and artillery. The work he had begun on his own initiative the Versailles bureaux continued officially. They sent the Grand Turk artillery officers and engineers, shipbuilders and even carpenters and calkers. Until the eighteenth century the two services had remained absolutely mediæval. Their complete transformation into a methodical and scientific organisation is entirely due to the French. That which the ancient monarchy had begun was continued by the Revolution and the governments

* Claude Alexandre, Comte de Bonneval, born 1675, died 1747, embraced the Mahomedan faith, 1730.

which followed. Barely was French collaboration in military instruction interrupted by General Bonaparte's Egyptian and Syrian Expeditions. Until 1870 there was a French military mission at Constantinople. Then, on the outbreak of war it was recalled. After the war, with a sense of honour and loyalty to be appreciated, the Turks made overtures for the sending of a new mission. At Paris it was thought fit not to give them a hearing. Then only did Turkey appeal to Germany, with the result that Von der Goltz was despatched to Constantinople.

It was France who introduced modern jurisprudence into Turkey and who organised the judicial system on occidental lines.

According to a system modelled on that of French judicature, civil, criminal and commercial cases are tried by courts of first instance, appeal courts and a court of cassation. A French councillor from the Ministry of Justice drafted a law instituting justices of peace. The commercial and criminal codes are translated literally, the penal code adapted from the French. In the mixed tribunal at Constantinople, which judges suits between Ottomans and foreigners, the language is French. The certificated pupils

of the Stamboul Law School who were thought capable of profiting by a post-graduate course abroad were sent all without exception to study law in French Universities and chiefly at the University of Paris.

France, too, created the Turkish financial system.

Until the Crimean War Turkey had had no conception of modern state finance, no notion of loans, no government bank. It was French financiers who negotiated the first Ottoman loan in 1858, and founded the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which, with the Ottoman Public Debt and the Tobacco Régie, entirely controls Turkish credit. I ignore neither English collaboration in the first loans and in the foundation of the State Bank, nor German and Austrian participation in the foundation of the Régie, but no one will question that French financiers took the initiative, that they supplied the greater part of the capital, and exercised the predominant influence.

It was not only in the purely financial department of government loans that French capital was employed. It contributed largely to the construction of a net-work of railways. French engineers with French money laid more than 1500 kilometres of rails in Turkey.

They constructed those main arteries, the Syrian railways and that line so important economically and strategically which unites Constantinople to Dedeagatch and Salonica. By virtue of quite recent agreements with the Turkish Government, the French were also to construct a vast net-work of railway lines in Armenia. French foremen and engineers were already proceeding to construct roads in Asia, a contract with the Minister of Public Works having already entrusted to the French the reconstruction of Turkish highways.

As for the harbours and quays, they were all, without exception, constructed by the French. When I say all, I mean those of Constantinople, Salonica (then Turkish), Smyrna, and Beyrouth, for there were no others worthy of the name. Elsewhere there exists nothing but roadsteads very indifferently safe.

It would be difficult to overestimate the result of this age-long collaboration, of this great and truly splendid work. A Frenchman travelling in Turkey might well think he had never left France. Turkey is the only foreign country in the world where a Frenchman knowing no language but his

own may go everywhere and be at ease. There is not an office, a bank, a shop where French is not spoken; in large towns one hears it constantly in the streets. As for Constantinople, one might spend—indeed many have spent—a whole life there without ever using any other language. Go to the Porte, the Ottoman Bank, the Public Debt or the Tobacco Régie, and you will be addressed in nothing but French. The same will happen if you dine with a Turkish minister, a Greek banker, an Armenian barrister, or a Jewish doctor. Outside his embassy, the German Ambassador, at the Porte or elsewhere, speaks nothing but French. Even through the lattice work which screens harem windows French has penetrated. Foreign ladies on their first visit to Turkish ladies are surprised by their excellent French and by the heaps of French books on tables and chiffoniers. But their amazement soon vanishes, for they quickly perceive that in this strange land, so far away, every one knows French and reads French in preference. Talaat Bey, so incredibly become our present enemy, knows no other foreign language. In like case is Djemal pasha, he who desired to attack Egypt. As for the Grand Vizier

and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Said Halim pasha, he speaks the idiomatic French of the Paris boulevards. A French adviser was one day highly entertained to hear him muttering as he read the text of a note: *Cette histoire-là va amener un méli-mélo infernal* (this business will end in an infernal " mix up ").

The Young Turk Revolution brought about no restriction on French collaboration. On the contrary, that tradition, which had been abandoned save in financial matters by Abdul Hamid, was resumed immediately after his fall. The cannon fired on the Black Sea ports by the German officers to whom the Turks had been so foolish as to confide their ironclads, drove from Constantinople not the French Ambassador only, but a French Inspector-General of gendarmerie, a French principal law adviser to the Ottoman Government, a French Inspector-General of Finance, a French technical adviser to the Board of Works, a French architect adviser to the city of Constantinople. With them went also financial collaborators of ancient date, a French Chairman * and the French General Manager of the Public Debt

* The Ottoman Public Debt has two Chairmen, one French and one English, who alternately preside.

with the numerous French staff of that Administration, of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, of the Régie, of the French Companies of the Quays, Roads, the Water Company, and heaven knows what else!—a veritable army: the army of the loyal and beneficent civil Mercenaries, evacuating with regret and a justifiable resentment the ancient kingdom of Soliman the Magnificent, the "France du Levant" * now transformed into an enemy country.

But how could it have become an enemy country when French influence there was so ancient, so deservedly founded, so manifestly persistent?

The question has frequently been asked. It has not always received a satisfactory answer.

* "France du Levant," applied to the Near East, has never been meant to convey, as is sometimes most erroneously thought, that French statesmen have ever conceived the whole of Turkey to form French preserves. It is a happy expression due to the member of the French Academy, M. Lamy, to summarise the work of France in the Levant. The expression may be compared to another one almost officially used in France, "L'Asie Française," by which is naturally meant the work of France in Asia.

IX

I RECALL a curious, and for us French a by no means unpleasant, spectacle: the decline of Baron Marschall, the famous German Ambassador at Constantinople, during the winter of 1908.

Relations between the Kaiser and Abdul Hamid had been too intimate and too well known for Germany not to be included in the execrations heaped by Turkish revolutionaries on the fallen tyrant. While every day they organised friendly manifestations in front of the embassies of the French and British, whom they respected because of their free institutions, while they flocked in crowds to the railway station to welcome the new British Ambassador, Sir Gerard Lowther, unharnessing his horses and themselves drawing his carriage to Pera, the approach to the German Embassy remained silent and deserted. The great Baron, who but a few days before

had been omnipotent, was condemned to suffer the worst insult that can be offered to a diplomat: the Young Turk ministers did not return cards.

The Baron had serious thoughts of obtaining his recall. But in diplomacy one must be supple. Consequently he was seen in the corridors of the Turkish Chamber arm-in-arm with his confidant, Paul Weitz, the correspondent of the *Frankfort Gazette*, distributing more smiles and handshakes than a candidate at an election. But it was no good. The first great speech delivered in the Chamber by Djavid bey, a speech which revealed his oratorical gifts and established his authority, was a Philippic against the convention of the Bagdad railway, whereby Abdul Hamid had granted the concession to the Germans. The Baron withdrew into his barrack-like Embassy at the Taxim and waited patiently.

In the autumn of 1910 thither he saw coming to him the Young Turk ministers, with Djavid at their head. The negotiations for a loan from France, after proceeding with difficulty and being envenomed by a violent press campaign, had been definitely broken off, on a question of a State Treasury and Court of Accounts of

which Paris saw fit to impose the establishment on Turkey. London, not wishing to thwart Paris, refused its aid. The Young Turks came to implore financial assistance from Berlin. It was granted forthwith. By express train came Herr Hellferich of the Deutsche Bank, now the Kaiser's Minister of Finance.* In a few days the bargain was done, without any haggling as to Treasury or Court of Accounts, as you may well believe. Friendly relations were restored and on the surest of bases, that of the benefactor and the benefited. It was well worth 150 poor millions of francs, invested moreover at six per cent. with the Constantinople customs as security.

The friendly relations thus established between the Young Turks and Baron Marschall were not permitted to lapse. And gradually the Kaiser resumed the game he had been playing in Turkey for twenty years.

The Kaiser may be a megalomaniac, a man of morbid impulses and theatrical conceit, but he possesses to a high degree the practical instincts of the greedy and wily breed of the Hohenzollerns. He very early conceived a most simple calculation. Germany has no

* Written in 1915.

Moslem subjects; England has 70 millions, France 30, Russia 20. To win the Sultan's friendship and to incite him to Pan-Islamism by stimulating his theocratic ambition, would be to place in German hands an important instrument for the creation of disturbances in French, British, and Russian dominions: it would be a way of creating a Moslem Gregory VII. minus his brains, but plus 800,000 bayonets. Moreover, the Kaiser is literary and knows his La Fontaine; he knows that every flatterer lives on him he flatters *; he saw that from the Sultan thus beguiled might be snatched rich prizes; good loans well secured, good orders for cannon, rifles, and munitions, good railway, irrigation, and mining concessions. Finally, well aware that in Turkey far more than elsewhere, words are more important than deeds, the Kaiser, by way of carrying out his programme, never did anything for Turkey, but lavished upon it the *hasheesh* of his compliments.

Never was mirage more skilfully evoked than by the Kaiser and his agents. In spirit they took the Sultan up on to the pinnacle of the political temple, they showed him the king-

* Tout flatteur vit aux dépens de celui qui l'écoute (Lafontaine,—Le Renard et le Corbeau).

doms of the world, where, outlined against an azure sky, could be discerned the white minarets of Islam: Hindustan, Turkestan, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria;—there was no question then of Morocco. "Glorious Caliph," they said, "all that is yours, or at least should be, and one day, perhaps, will be, should the opportunity occur for us to help you to deliver your brethren, your subjects in bondage. Meanwhile what a field for your activity, what scope for the play of your incomparable intelligence! Will not your Majesty ordain a secret diplomacy which shall awake in the heart of the oppressed confidence in the Caliph's solicitude, which shall establish, against the day of attack, secret friends in all enemy strongholds?"

To a heart still bleeding from the wounds of 1878, the artificial paradise seemed passing sweet. Things political were assuming a new aspect, acquiring an unsuspected beauty; his dominions seemed to be increased by all the immensity of his dreams. Though at first he had disliked the Germans, never having forgiven Bismarck's brutality towards the Ottoman plenipotentiaries at the Berlin Congress, he came to feel towards them as one does towards the complacent intermediary

through whom one procures a rare, injurious, but exquisite poison. Moreover, to complete his work, the Kaiser spared no pains. On the morrow of the Armenian massacres, when the Sultan's hand was red to the nails with blood, he seized it, pressed it, and declared himself his best friend. Such delicacy could not fail to charm; the Sultan was touched, he was won; and for drug and flatteries he paid munificently by the concession of the Bagdad Railway. But he was not intoxicated. Satiated with power, imbued with scepticism by twenty years' daily reading of secret police reports, this old despot's nerves were pleasantly thrilled by the action of the Pan-Islamic *hasheesh:* nevertheless he knew the dangers of the drug, and he used it like a confirmed but prudent smoker who can keep within bounds. He instituted a secret diplomacy, employed agents in Africa, Asia, even in the Far East, subsidised occasionally, bestowed orders now and then, fanned the flame of Islamic sentiment by constructing the railway—as much strategic as religious—of the Hidjaz; but all the time, while playing with fire, he took care never to burn his fingers. His strongly developed instinct of self-preservation kept him in the

narrow path and enabled him to encourage the goat with the right hand while stroking the cabbage with the left.

On the nervous system of the Young Turks the German drug acted very differently.

X

Those Young Turks were all very young indeed, and of humble status. Poor, of obscure origin, they knew nothing of life save what may be learned in students' boarding-houses, remote garrisons, or political prisons. Their revolution's marvellous success had somewhat turned their heads. Everywhere they were applauded as "the Heroes of Liberty." Those humble telegraph clerks, modest professors from Turkish provinces, hungry Stamboul scribblers, lieutenants with budding mustache, suddenly beheld their portraits displayed on picture post-cards in all the shop-windows, nay, more, supreme honour! reproduced in the great illustrated journals of Europe. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* devoted a whole article to them. Moreover, had not this formidable ancient régime, which, at the risk of their lives, they had overthrown in a single day, been more encrusted with ignorance, more defiled by

corruption and espionage, more bloodstained with massacres than the history of any other unfortunate nation? Only dupes or accomplices could attempt to justify it. It seemed to them right, therefore, that they should be applauded; and they flattered themselves that on the velvet carpet of general sympathy they were playing a game the winning of which was a foregone conclusion.

They were suddenly sobered, however, by an icy douche, which, bringing them face to face with grim reality, was very cruel to the enthusiasm of these novices.

Their openly avowed object, nothing short of a Turkish renaissance, threatened immense interests. For many of its neighbours, the Ottoman Empire was not, as has been so often said, merely "the Sick Man," but "the Sick Uncle," "the American Uncle," fabulously rich, already on his death-bed, condemned by the princes of medical science. Now a handful of inexperienced young surgeons were endeavouring to revive the old creature, to bring colour to his cheeks and light into his eyes. This was unpleasant, worse, it was alarming. Straightway, certain neighbouring states hastened to insure themselves: Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria

declared herself independent, the Cretan Assembly voted the Island's annexation to Greece.

Another of the Young Turks' objects, the establishment of a parliamentary régime, irritated the most disinterested diplomats, the very men whom the Young Turks ingenuously acclaimed. Would there then be a Chamber, a Senate, chatter-boxes discussing everything, and giving themselves airs, impervious to the majesty of *grands-cordons* and *kavasses?* Above all they would put on the shelf all those high officials of Abdul Hamid, so supple, so discreet, with whom for so many years, by dint of careful spoon-feeding, the business of state had been secretly and smoothly transacted. The Ambassador of one great democracy, who with marvellous intelligence and skill had organised his work in accordance with the Hamidian régime, made no attempt to conceal his disgust with this unexpected parliamentarianism. Referring with contemptuous fury to these young revolutionaries, he called them by a term which, picturesque and popular as it may be in barracks, would hardly appeal to the ingenuous reader. Another ambassador, also representing a great liberal power, a gentleman

of more polished speech if unequal parts, when it was suggested to him at a ball at the Russian Embassy that there should be presented to him a few Young Turks who were described as exercising considerable influence in the Union and Progress Party which had carried out the Revolution, declined with a wave of the hand, saying coldly: "I do not know that '*Societé anonyme.*' " *

The financial, no more than the diplomatic, world was inclined to smile on the new régime. Eager for independence, ignoring all the requirements of a financial policy, and desiring to prove their determination to negotiate all money affairs openly, the Young Turks declared that henceforth they would dispense with the control of the Public Debt as also with all the traditional good services of Western finance, and that their first State Loan would be offered to the highest bidder, like an order for army boots. Financiers are as susceptible as diplomats. At Paris, high finance was annoyed: and its resentment, reacting on the press, contributed to break off the négotiations for the loan of 1910.

* Literally, anonymous society,—the French technical expression for a Company limited by shares.

To have alarmed their ambitious neighbours, to have disturbed the habits of ambassadors, to have irritated financiers and provoked the thunderbolts of the press was unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, and in any case not irremediable. An extremely intelligent diplomat, M. Revoil, who had become Director-General of the Ottoman Bank, soon reconciled finance and revolutionary Turkey. The ambassadors became accustomed to the personnel of the new government, liked certain members of it, and invited them to dinner. Divided between a desire at one blow to settle the question by throttling "the Sick Man" and a fear at once of Turkey, whose army had shown itself formidable in 1897, and of the Great Powers, who were anxious to avoid a conflagration in the Balkans, the neighbouring states consulted together, waited for an opportunity to decide, in short, remained inactive. Thereby they granted a respite which might well have been used for something like a definitive consolidation. Such a movement did indeed begin. It did not succeed. Incidental circumstances, which rendered the situation difficult, were reinforced by ethnical and historical tendencies which rendered it desperate.

One day, at Stamboul, while waiting to see the Minister of War, I walked up and down the great hall of the Seraskerat, looking at the collection of ancient weapons and fine Arabic inscriptions decorating the walls. It was in 1909, soon after the taking of Constantinople by Mahmoud Chevket pasha. A young Turkish officer whom I knew happened to be there. He said to me: "You know Arabic—would you read this inscription?" And he pointed to that opposite the windows looking out on to the vast courtyard. Despite the flourishes, the writing was admirably clear. And I could easily read the Prophet's famous saying: "Paradise lies in the shadow of the swords." "So does liberty," said the young officer, "and let him who lays hands on it beware." With these words he struck the pommel of his sabre.

He spoke the truth. In the shadow of the swords was born and lived the Turkish revolution. Too often has this main characteristic of its origin and tragic evolution been lost sight of. The Young-Turk revolution was a revolution of Janissaries, imbued with the ideas of the National Convention. From this point of view Enver pasha and Talaat bey are eminently representative characters.

It has often been said, it has sometimes even been written, that Enver was in German pay. Such a statement reveals a remarkable ignorance of character and of the situation. To maintain that Enver involved his country in a European war because he had been bought is as absurd as to assert that Robespierre was bribed to institute the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Enver is a dark little man with a dull complexion, as handsome in his way as was Saint-Just in his. His intelligence is mediocre. His speech is hesitating. In society he easily becomes confused, blushes and looks down. Had he been born in France, he would have entered and left Saint-Cyr in the 150th and after having published with Chapelot * conscientious essays on ammunition columns and commissariat, he would have taken his pension as a retired major. But the stars were for him; at twenty-four he was borne upwards to zenith by marvellous events aided by his own strength of character and force of mind. In morals he is a Puritan. He neither drinks nor smokes: his mentality is like a gun's barrel; not many ideas enter his narrow brain, but once entered they stick

* Chapelot is the well-known Paris military publisher.

there, and on the rare occasions when they come forth it is like a flash, with a well-fired bullet's hardness and directness of aim. At Constantinople his courage and perfect honesty have never been called in question, not even by his worst enemies, and he has many mortal ones.

In valour and integrity Talaat is his equal. This tall, stout man—he weighs over fifteen stone—with regular features and a bland expression, dissimulates beneath a constant smile the determined and violent spirit of the revolutionary: a sort of a peasant-like Danton, patriotic, honestly convinced, but rough, incredibly ignorant, and imagining that State affairs can be conducted by means of the tricks and guiles of a horsedealer. Once convinced that his cause is right, he becomes absolutely unscrupulous as to the means of advancing it. Had he deemed it for the public good, he would not have hesitated, without the slightest shade of remorse, to order ten September massacres.

The interview between King Edward VII. and the Czar Nicholas II. at Reval was the spark that fired the Turkish Revolution. Parliamentarians of the type of Talaat persuaded Janissaries of the type of Enver

that Great Britain and Russia had agreed to amputate that part of Turkey which under Abdul Hamid's rule had been attacked by gangrene. In the eyes of the Turkish reformers the only remedy was that of the French in 1789, or if necessary, in 1793. Enver was the first to draw the sword. The others followed his example. The Sultan took fright. The revolution was accomplished.

Then the Janissaries returned to their barracks. They were prepared to leave the rest to the Parliamentarians, who, they thought, were more conversant with politics. But, all the same, the military did not cease secretly to observe their civilian colleagues, ready to defend them if attacked, ready to make short work of them if they did not go straight. Liberty lay in the shadow of the swords. And swords were constantly being drawn. In April, 1909, when, through the intrigues of Hamidians and the *hodjas*, the Constantinople garrison, consisting of supporters of the old régime officered by revolutionaries, rose and massacred its officers together with agnostic deputies and freemasons, once again the Janissaries came to the rescue. When they had taken possession of the city and hanged the ringleaders, they

established and maintained martial law in the capital. In the spring of 1911, when they considered that leading revolutionaries had mismanaged home affairs and especially finance, they rattled their swords; and, without more ado, Talaat, Halîl, and Djavid sent in their resignations. It was the swords that brought about the fall of Mahmoud Chevket and Kutchuk Saîd in 1912, the fall of Kiamil and the death of Nazim in 1913, that the same year avenged Mahmoud Chevket, himself assassinated by conspirators who were commanded by an officer. There was blood in the shadow of the swords.

Violent as they were, both military and civil revolutionaries constituted an *élite*. Incontestably they represented all that was most patriotic and most honest among the Turks. But their distinction lay rather in their motives than in their capacity.

In these revolutionary brains the inevitable ethnological deficiencies persisted; and, of most serious import was the fact that they had only the vaguest and most insufficient realisation of their own defects. In the so-called "technical" departments of Finance, Post Office, Public Works, War, Navy, Justice even, they employed foreign advisers,

chiefly French, a few British, and only at the War Office Germans. For they admitted that Sultan Hamid's thirty years of obscurantism rendered the collaboration of educational specialists advisable. But, for those essentially political departments of Home and Foreign Affairs, on which the life of the nation depended, they imagined themselves sufficient, believing that their patriotism and their sense of national interest would render them equal to the task.

Now they were all, or at any rate those who counted, Turks and Mohammedans.

Their patriotism, which was of childish simplicity, led them to conceive a new Turkey, swept and garnished, administered by honest and educated officials, controlled by a free parliament and press,—but withal a Turkey which should be entirely Turkish, governed by Turks, writing and speaking nothing but Turkish. They would not even admit that a knowledge of any language but Turkish was necessary for Justices of the Peace, whose work it was to mete out, according to an oral code, gratuitous justice to the poor, illiterate peasants, totally ignorant, many of them, of the tongue of their judges. One can imagine what a source of insoluble conflicts thus arose

with the Arabs, the Greeks, the Armenians, and—at that time, when Macedonia and Albania were still in Turkish hands—the Bulgars, the Serbs, and the Albanians, all demanding recognition of their respective languages and a share in the administration in proportion to their number.

Such a state of affairs filled the Turkish revolutionaries with indignation and amazement. What! The vulgar herd delivered from Hamidian tyranny by their betters' courage and magnanimity, failing to be grateful and respectful, daring to be refractory! Janissaries and Parliamentarians united in haughty incomprehension. And the sword alone, but now first that of Arab rebels, then that of the soldiers of the Balkans, cut the Gordian knot, amidst disasters.

XI

By inflaming and directing the nationalism of the Young Turks, by leading them gently towards the artificial paradise of Pan-Islamism, Baron Marschall, either personally or by means of avowed or secret agents, had prepared the Balkan troubles.

This corpulent giant, with heavy, imperturbable countenance and glassy eyes, imposed on the revolutionaries by the grandeur of his past and by his condescending good nature. He would utter familiarities in a majestic manner and clap Turkish ministers on the shoulder with the air of a Talleyrand taking the arm of an embassy attaché. By such attentions these naïf revolutionaries were overwhelmed. What simplicity, what affability! What a kind heart! That the man who had known Bismarck and directed the foreign affairs of Germany should come and smoke a cigar and talk with them, that he should

appreciate them, understand them, and sympathise with them so perfectly!

"Yes," he would say, "a great future awaits Turkey as soon as from a military point of view she has been completely reorganised and has constructed that great Bagdad line. Therein the all-wisdom of the Kaiser, who is Turkey's faithful, perhaps her only, friend, sees the chief factor of a renaissance of a great Caliphate, which shall be as prosperous as that of the Abbasides, with all the developed resources of the Mesopotamian Basin and the Iranian Plateau, strong with the solidity and courage of the Turks rendered effective by German *Kultur*." This refrain was taken up by the gossips—notably by Haqqy pasha, then Grand Vizier and now Ambassador of Germanised Turkey in Berlin—by the newspapers subsidised by Germany who took care to underline points which were therein merely hinted. Of course, Germany was their only friend. What could be expected from France, from Russia, from England, who held in bondage millions of their Moslem brethren, and who in Turkey detested their possible political deliverer? Every day in the "Jeune Turc" and the "Osmanischer Lloyd" might be read

paragraphs on the horrible excesses of Russians and British in Persia, on the dangerous unrest in India, on the iniquitous claims of the French to certain oases in the Sahara, described as obviously Ottoman.

And none of this was without effect. For the Turkish revolutionaries soon fell into the snare laid for all revolutionaries: that mania for what might be termed "revolutionary imperialism" such as during the Great French Revolution was expressed by the formula "War on Kings."

The Young Turks, although for the most part agnostics and freemasons, remained politically passionate Moslems in the manner of certain mediæval Templars who, debauchees and drunkards, believing neither in God nor the Devil, none the less took pride in the fanaticism of their order. Like the Sultan Hamid, these Turkish revolutionaries were dazzled by the hallucination of Pan-Islamic irredentism, by the mirage of vast kingdoms with white minarets beneath an azure sky. Only their youth and their complete lack of any political education led them into dangerous indiscretions. To begin with, Haqqy pasha succeeded in winning from them the permission to submit to the irresistible arguments

of the Germans and to grant them a concession complementary to that Bagdad Agreement, which in the earlier days of the revolution Djavid bey had so eloquently attacked. But, worse still: abandoning their original design of secularising the ancient theocratic Turkey of the Caliphs and converting it into something like a Western state, on a purely rationalist basis, a design which had everywhere, in France especially, won for them the warmest sympathy, these infatuated reformers believed they had discovered an admirable political basis, a means of fusing all the various Moslem races of the Turkish Empire which would also intimidate the cabinets of Paris, London, and Petrograd. This brilliant discovery was International Islam. Stamboul newspapers appeared with the headline: "the Islamic World." Wherever there was any recalcitrancy, any Moslem unrest, the French, British, and Russian governments could invariably trace the action of German and Turkish agents, who were not infrequently identical. In vain did the Porte deny and protest its innocence of such machinations. Sometimes it was right; for many of these Turkish agents were amateurs, who acted without authority, working at

their own expense or supported by Germany. This, however, did not allay the irritation of the Great Powers. Russia, who had at first very loyally and with marked amiability endeavoured to come to an understanding with the Young Turks, was annoyed and recalled her urbane ambassador, M. Tcharykov. The Foreign Office, which had long been better disposed towards the Young Turks than the British Embassy at Constantinople, began to form one of those serious British antipathies as unfathomable as they are lasting. France was wounded by certain propaganda in Tunis, by the tone of the Turkish press at the time of the Agadir crisis, and many of her politicians began to consider the Young Turks insincere and dangerous. Hence there arose a vicious circle, a perpetual interchange of mistrust and resentment. During the Tripoli War and the Balkan War, the Triple Entente's official sympathy was with Italy and the Balkan people. It seemed to Stamboul excessively hard and cruel when in the darkest days of defeat this attitude was accentuated by the press of Petrograd, London, and especially of Paris, which is the most widely read in Turkey, where every one understands French. The hearts of the Young Janissaries were

filled with sorrow, shame, and desire for revenge. The latter was quickened by their having, through a turn of the political wheel, been deprived of the command in the most decisive moment of the war. They believed therefore that the disasters of 1912 might have been averted had they, instead of Abdul Hamid's old incapable generals, been in a position to act and direct. The march on Adrianople and the easy capture of the town, which had been evacuated, transformed their impression into a profound conviction.

At the same time, another idea was dawning in their minds. This was the conviction that civilians were not conversant with politics at all, that the diplomatic and legal hair splitting of these frock-coated gentlemen missed fire, that an officer's simple military common sense is more clear-sighted, and that henceforth not liberty merely, but politics, diplomacy, everything ought to rest in the shadow of the swords; that the swords alone count.

XII

On the outbreak of the Great War the conflict between the military and civilians became acute. To civilians this terrible cataclysm seemed a blessing for Turkey. Now at length they would be left in peace to reorganise in their own way. Now at length, instead of being hustled, they would be courted: some would solicit their neutrality, others their intervention. By dint of clever bargaining, all manner of facilities might be won, economic privileges which would make an end of budget deficits and perhaps render a surplus possible. Now at length, might the commerce of neutral Turkey see the fat years succeeding the lean. And this bright opening in the Turkish clouds might endure long. For no matter who conquered, he would be far too cruelly wounded to think of anything but healing his wounds for many a year, and would lack the power, if not the will, to cut pieces out of the Turkish cake. This was the view of all

civilians and notably of the heir apparent—the aged Sultan hardly counts—and of the Grand Vizier, Prince Saïd Halim, a gentleman of Franco-British education and of sound common sense.

To the young Janissaries, led by Enver pasha, Minister of War at twenty-nine, such reasoning seemed nothing more than the conceits of civilians, craven hearted and decidedly dull. The Germans were right. If Russia were victorious she would devour Constantinople and Armenia. Then France, to strike a balance, would take Syria, and England Mesopotamia. Was not Russia the eternal enemy? Had she not brought about the formation of the Balkan League, which had just snatched from Turkey all her European provinces? Intervention against Russia was absolutely necessary and in no way hazardous. Germany's military superiority was irresistible, overwhelming. The reward would be magnificent: the autonomy of Macedonia and Albania, under the suzerainty of the Sultan, the liberation of the Caucasus, of Turkestan, and—if France and Great Britain were so foolish as to take part against Turkey—of India, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco. These last countries, returning joyfully to

obedience to the Caliph, would reconstitute a great Caliphate, which would be more extensive than either that of the Abbasides or the Ommiades. And finally the world, organised on the only rational basis, would be ruled by the two lawful and necessary authorities: the Caliph and the Kaiser.

To civilians these visions seemed sheer madness. Turkey would be dismembered only if she intervened and was defeated; for never would she be pardoned for having turned against her old friends in a quarrel which was not hers. Even were she victorious she would have everything to lose. Triumphant Germanism would make of her an Austro-German Egypt. She had only to remain quiet. Therein lay wisdom, security, advantage.

Forain would have appreciated these Turkish civilians; for they did hold out till the end,* save perhaps Talaat, who seems at the last moment to have gone over to the militarists. And they were not without merit. Germany had bought all the Turkish newspapers. We did not think it worth while to secure a

* This allusion is to one of Forain's cartoons: a picture of a *poilu* at the front, with the device *Pourvu que les civils tiennent.*

single mouthpiece at Stamboul. Since the revolution there has been an immense amount of newspaper reading in Turkey. Every morning and every evening were meted out to the Turks the German *communiqués*, the Wolff despatches and leaders inspired by the German Embassy, or sometimes even entirely written by a German secretary and translated. Further and more serious, the worst possible interpretation was given to our meekness. When German sailors brutally destroyed the wireless telegraph apparatus on board a French packetboat at anchor in the Dardanelles, we were content with a mere note of protest. When the ambassadors of the Allies, having been previously warned and given plenty of time to confer, received the denunciation of the Capitulations,*—another note. When the Turkish police closed the foreign post offices,—again only a note. When, on the Turkish mobilisation being ordered, requisitions of unparalleled brutality and stupidity commandeered all the possible goods in the custom house, even to women's silk stockings, again we contented ourselves with a note; and we protested no further

* The famous *Capitulations* signed by Francis I. See *ante*, p. 47.

when it pleased a German pasha to close the Dardanelles without even informing the Grand Vizier. Evidently our plan was to avoid giving any pretext for the declaration of Holy War by abstaining from the slightest appearance of assuming initiative against Turkey. Many Turks, incapable of comprehending such diplomacy, concluded that to put pen to paper was the only action of which we were capable.

Possibly this attitude may have confirmed the militarists in their blindness. At any rate from day to day the civilians lost influence. Second lieutenants, even gendarmes, disregarded orders written by the Grand Vizier or the Home Secretary. Now for the last time the Janissaries were all powerful. And the holes in the Janissary brain were filled in, not by a beneficent foreign power of abstraction, but by the deadly stupefying Teutonic drug. Flattering hallucinations veiled the sordid, ugly fact: that of Turkey vowed to death to enable Germans to close the Dardanelles, to immobilise a few Russian corps in the Caucasus, a few British regiments in Egypt. Like those horses in the Spanish bull fights, whose rent bodies are hastily stitched together in order that once again they

may be driven against the bull, so Turkey, still pale and bleeding from the wounds received in the Balkan struggle, was put on her feet once more, in order that the decoy might be driven to the slaughter-house.

Civilians perceived what was happening. They saw an abyss opening when the embassies of France, Britain, and Russia took down their flags. Four ministers, Djavid bey at their head, immediately sent in their resignations. The Grand Vizier, horrified, tore his beard and cried: "I will not have this war! It is madness!" Imperial Princesses wept. The heir apparent, with bowed head, sat murmuring for hours: "Calamity! Calamity!" * But the lot was cast. In 1808, by incomprehension, the Janissaries had slain his ancestor Selim III., the reforming emperor. In 1914, by incomprehension, they were slaying the Empire itself. Turkey was expiring in the shadow of the swords.

* Without any longer fearing to injure him, I may now say, that in a farewell audience, he charged a Frenchman, whom he honoured with his friendship, to go and assure M. Poincaré and Sir Edward Grey of his deep sorrow and his complete sympathy with France and Great Britain.

XIII

"MEN ever act in the same way."

Machiavelli's saying would seem to have a special application to Turkey. From the mediæval origin of her empire until quite recent days, coinciding with those of our own life, she has ever offered the same spectacle.

But listen to the words of the author of "The Prince." In a few lines that sombre and profound writer gives the key to the Turkish enigma. "There are three types of minds: one discovers that which is important for it to know: another comprehends that which others reveal to it; a third is incapable of understanding either by itself or through others. The first are excellent; the second good, the others absolutely null." In Turkey a small *élite*—Sultans down to the nineteenth century, a few Young Turks in the twentieth—belonged at least to the second class. They realised the deficiencies of the Turkish mind and the mortal danger incurred by its incapacity, either by means of invention or imitation, to adapt itself to a political environment which is in a state of perpetual

flux and progress. Their intelligent efforts were constantly being thwarted by the opposition, sometimes invincibly inert, sometimes furiously aggressive, of an immense majority of minds of the third class, absolutely null and yet controlling both the force which pours fire into the soul and the force which puts weapons into the hands. In the eighteenth century, the coalition between *hodjas* and Janissaries ruined every project of reform; in the nineteenth, Sultan Mahmoud broke the Janissaries' opposition by a massacre, but was driven to compromise with the *hodjas*. In the twentieth, it seemed as if, with a young army freed from the dead weight of oriental superstition, with the blind hatred of the *hodjas* held in check, the Turkish bark might be refloated and brought safely to harbour.

No such thing happened. This last experience was of all the most piteous. The *élite* was only an apparent, a relative *élite*. And even it was divided. The fatal third type of mind, that of the Janissaries, at the psychological moment asserted itself in the army and blindly threw the weight of its swords into the wrong scale, which, sending up the opposite scale, decided the condemnation of Turkey, which was weighed and found wanting.

For, willing as I am to admit that herein possibly lay no malice or conscious intention to evil and mischief, and that once again as always it was the result of incomprehension, nevertheless the effect was identical. Put a carter, as decent a man in his way as you will, but ignorant of his incompetence, on the box of a hundred horse-power motor-car, and imagine the result. The Turkish incomprehension of Statecraft is decidedly irremediable; it causes useless, cruel, and dangerous suffering, and the list is long of those who suffer.

The Armenians suffer. They groan beneath a purely military conception of civil administration, which at the slightest protest leads to pitiless repression: beneath the insufficiency, or, too often, the total absence of means of communication, paralysing the efforts of police and gendarmes; beneath Moslem prejudice which hesitates to authorise the protective measures needed by Christians: above all, beneath the inertia, the weakness and folly of the authorities, which, in the country, leave the Armenian peasants, with their wives, their daughters, their goods, to the ferocious good pleasure of Kurdish beys, and in the towns bring about periodically such fearful

massacres that no cemetery in the world would be a mortuary large enough for their victims. Engraved upon my memory will remain a sight I saw in 1896, tumbrels of corpses slowly, at walking pace, going up the avenue of the Sublime Porte, while behind them there dripped into the dust a long train of blood.

The Greeks suffer. Undisturbed since the tempest of 1821, grown rich and influential, they suddenly paid dearly for the recent Greek triumphs. The idea was conceived of effecting a transmigration between the Turks of lost Macedonia and the Greeks of the Anatolian coast. There was something to be said for this idea. The greatest statesman of Modern Greece, Venizelos, accepted it. Life is as unbearable for Moslems in Christian countries as for Christians in Moslem lands. But the enterprise was set on foot in so rough and brutal a manner as to disgust even that intelligent Young Turk, Rahmi bey, who was then, and, I believe, still is, Governor-General of the vilayet of Smyrna. Thousands of Greek families were turned into the streets, driven down to the coast, and, starving and panic-stricken, hustled on board. In the public gardens of Mytilene, I saw a camp of refugees whose exhaustion and want made

one's heart bleed. Men half dead with fatigue had fallen on to the ground, where they slept, emaciated, open-mouthed, hollow-eyed. Wasted women held up one hand in silence, while with the other they pointed to little children, muttering in their sleep, *Peinô; Peinô* (I am hungry; I am hungry).

The Arabs suffer, mainly morally. Their pride is wounded; they abhor the idea of being subjected through the mere power of the bayonet to a race of men whom they regard as barbarians. Their business sense is wounded also. They are incensed to see the roads so out of repair as to be dangerous, clerks and officials lazy and cavilling, tribunals corrupt and ignorant, delaying business and lowering to nothing the value of land. But physically also they are apt to be wounded. To give only one example: in 1911, when the foolish designs of the Governor-General of the Damascus vilayet, whose name I have forgotten, had most uselessly and absurdly provoked first the protests, then the rising of Bedouins in Palestine, soldiers were ordered in the direction of Karak, and there was terrible bloodshed.

More than any, the Turks suffer. Yes, the Turks. From a common saying, thoughtlessly

repeated, there has grown up about them the false legend that all Turks are officials, either civil or military. This is an excellent example of hasty generalisation. It is true that, in Turkey, nearly all military and civil officials are Turks, but they number but a few thousand, while there are eight millions of Turks, eight millions of peasants, whose condition is very like that of the peasants of seventeenth-century France whom La Bruyère has so vividly described. They also, bending under a brazen law, painfully earn the wherewithal to pay taxes and maintain just sufficient strength to keep on earning sufficient to pay them. If they fail, then, when Constantinople is hard pressed for money, the taxgatherers dun them mercilessly, and beat them if need be, like tired horses whom pain alone can goad to climb the steep hill. And if, even then, they cannot pay, their poor property is distrained and everything sold save that which is necessary for the accomplishment of their primary functions of tax paying. For they have a secondary function: that of providing fodder for cannon. When the taxgatherer has done with them, the recruiting officer taps them on the shoulder. They are weighed down by the

heavy burden of almost perpetual obligatory military service. In the autumn of 1912, when, the Balkan war becoming inevitable, general mobilisation was decreed, we saw them coming into Constantinople, in interminable files, two by two, holding one another's hands like children, beardless youths, men in middle life, and in hoary old age. Thus it has always been. From the Indian Ocean to the Balkans, from the Persian frontier to the Ionian Sea, whosoever digs the soil will find everywhere the bones of Anatolian peasants. They have fought all the campaigns, the most desperate and the most stupid. Now, as I write, while at Constantinople the officers of the Prussian staff, flushed with food and champagne, sneer as they spread themselves out in commandeered motor-cars, in the cottages throughout Anatolia there must be a great lamentation, women weeping the dead of Gallipoli after the dead of the Balkans.

The state, for whom they do everything, for them does nothing. Scarcely has it instituted one land bank, of meagre funds and indifferent administration, with the mission of saving the peasants from the fatal assistance of Greek and Armenian usurers by some poor little loan, when they lack money

with which to purchase seed. In the army, pervaded by the abominable Prussian spirit, the peasants are treated with horrible brutality, struck in the face for the slightest fault. From their distant garrisons many return ill; and, as the state takes no precautions, as in Asian plains there are no hospitals and no doctors, syphilis is beginning to sap the vitality of the proverbially robust race. During the Balkan War, through incredibly bad commissariat, there was a scarcity of bread even at San Stefano, at the very gates of Constantinople. With horror, in our hospital, we saw soldiers die, not of wounds, but of hunger. So long it was since they had eaten that their throats had grown incapable of swallowing. Nevertheless the wounded never complained. The poor peasants, tortured and neglected, remained as gentle as children, and showed themselves grateful for the slightest attention. If they could no longer speak, they would convey their thanks by a smile or a movement of the hand. And when they felt that the Great Hour had come, their countenances became composed and grave, and they died nobly, without a movement, without a sound, in the unique dignity of silence.

XIV

It is not only Ottoman subjects who suffer from Turkish incomprehension. So intermingled are international relations that in the family of states the action of each member reverberates throughout the whole body. Splendid isolation is a myth, an impossibility. Remote Japan, surrounded by immense oceans, aspired to it a century ago. American gunboats tore the veil from her illusions; and for the Japanese mind that painful awakening was the first step on the ladder of a marvellous evolution.

Russia is the first foreign state to suffer from Turkish folly. Already in peace-time the danger was grave. Russia in our day represents what Sicily was under the Roman Empire—the granary of the world. Its Black Land, especially since the agrarian reforms which followed the Manchurian War, produces enough wheat for the mills of the

world. To millions of Russian cultivators it brings prosperity if it sells well, hardship if it sells badly, ruin if it does not sell at all. And its price falls or rises capriciously in function of that independent variable: the liberty of the Straits. If it be menaced ever so slightly, if there be the least fear of the Straits being closed, straightway the rate of maritime insurance rises and the price of wheat falls rapidly.

But in peace-time the danger thus involved is as nothing to that which from this cause Russia runs in time of war. Bernhardi, of too famous renown, has written the following, or something like it—I can vouch for the idea, if not for the words—"Russia cannot be conquered, but she can be starved out." "Starved" through lack of munitions, it must be understood; for everything depends on this. That heartless freebooter has unerring military insight. It is not difficult to understand why the Germans could not conceal their rage when England entered the war and why above all things they closed the Dardanelles. Perfectly informed by their thousands of spies, they well knew that their only chance of winning lay, as in the tragic picture, in the terrible argument of the last

cartridge.* Their true superiority was that of munitions. With England on the side of the Allies, it meant, for us, control of the sea, the possibility of remedying the known lack of munitions, and eventually as the months dragged out, of replacing it by a superabundance, which, to our advantage, should upset the balance of military strength. Once the Dardanelles were closed, then Russia, with ports either insufficient or impossibly remote, would be incapable of benefiting from the Anglo-French control of the sea. In such a case, in the vital matter of munitions, Russia would be entirely thrown upon her own resources; and, as Germany well knew, her industrial organisation was defective. Hence Russia would be starved out as Bernhardi desired. It was the blocking of the Dardanelles that caused the fall of Przemysl and Warsaw. When there was talk of a German attempt to help the Turks and to reinforce the defence of the Dardanelles, I do not believe that any sensible person doubted it.† The great defect of the German armour is the sea; the Atlantic Ocean certainly, but far more the narrow

* Allusion to the celebrated picture of Detaille and de Neuville, "La dernière cartouche."

† Written August 12th, 1915.

blue thread, which unites the Mediterranean —*mare nostrum*—to the friendly Black Sea.

Great Britain and France, though less directly, so to speak less geographically, affected by Turkish dullness, have none the less suffered from it. In Moslem law there is much to say with regard to the Caliphate of the Turkish sultans. But at present, this caliphate, fortified by the *de facto* right of four centuries and by considerable military prestige, is what our British friends might call a hard fact. I am far from exaggerating the ascendancy of the Grand Master of the Order of Islam. From the first I always maintained that his proclamation of a Holy War would arouse no echo in India, Turkestan, Egypt, Algeria, Tunis, or Morocco. Nevertheless the alternative must be faced. Turkey may follow either what I will call the policy of Leo XIII. or another: she may elect to live on wisely cordial terms with those great Moslem powers, France, Great Britain, and Russia, or she may endeavour to stir up dissensions between those Powers and their subjects of the Moslem faith. It would be inconsistent with my belief and opinion to say that I believe that Turkey's adoption of the second course would constitute any

grave danger—and the facts prove that German hopes in this direction have been disappointed; but it would be an impertinence—why should Turkey meddle in the business, ignorant of that foundation of all rational policy: the entire separation between the ideas of religion and nationality?—a nuisance, for in the Moslem dominions of Great Britain, France, or Russia, there may well be visionaries and intriguers whom Turkish machinations would encourage to worry the administrators of those provinces; and in case of war, as we are experiencing it now, a thorn in the side, the absurdity of which but aggravates the situation. That the sons of France and the sons of Germany should eventually fall in battle one against another is an event unfortunately not beyond comprehension: the quarrel is an old one; the criminal folly of the 1871 settlement of the Alsace-Lorraine Question created a perpetual source of unrest; the rapacity and arrogance of the German Junkers only precipitated a conflict which their blind irreconcilability would always have left latent. But 45,000 British and 20,000 French *

* Unfortunately very many more. These lines were written in 1915.

casualties incurred in the course of the war against the Turks, whom for centuries we have kept going with our brains, our money, and, when the need arose, with our blood, truly that is monstrous. A suffering occasioned by ungrateful foolishness of such dimensions over-reaches the limit; it is inadmissible and intolerable because it is insane.

XV

A SCHOLARLY Roumanian diplomatist, M. Djuvara, published, two years ago,* a voluminous book entitled "One Hundred Schemes for the Partition of the Turkish Empire." For he informs us that from the Middle Age down to the present day there have been no less than one hundred. I have not the least intention of adding a chapter to that volume—and for many reasons, the first and not the only one being that such a task would demand a book for itself and necessitate a preliminary and minute study of the immense masses of documents bearing on this most important and complicated question, which are accumulating in the Foreign Offices of London, Paris, Petrograd, Rome, and probably Athens. I would simply venture a few very general observations based on a principle too often disregarded in diplomacy and politics: the Principle of Least Suffering.

We may say on the whole that every one

*Written in 1915.

suffers from Turkish incomprehension, or nearly every one: in the East every one, in the West all with whom we are concerned. What is the remedy for such suffering at home and abroad?

If this suffering were confined to home affairs, it would seem that the remedy would not be far to seek; it is clearly indicated by the whole of Turkish history, more especially by its latest chapters. In the Turkish brain are holes which foreign brains must fill in. All the Turkish intellectual *élite*—formerly the Sultans, later Turkish liberals—have admitted it. Whether it were a question of the Bonnevals,* the Totts,† the Juchereau de Saint-Denis‡ of former

* See *ante*, ch. viii.

† François, Baron de Tott, 1733–1793. A French diplomatist, who having been French consul in the Crimea, went to Constantinople in 1767, and there began to reform the Turkish army and navy, and to fortify the approaches to the Black Sea. He published at Amsterdam, 1784, *Mémoires sur les Turcs et les Tartares.*

‡ Antoine Juchereau de Saint-Denis, 1778–ab. 1842, a French general. Having studied at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, he went to Constantinople in 1807, was there commissioned by Selim III. to superintend the fortifications of the Empire. His services were especially useful in the war against Russia, 1807. He is the author of *La Révolution de Constantinople en* 1807 *et* 1808 *précédé d'Observations Générales sur l'Etat Actuel de l'Empire Ottoman.*

times or of the Jolys, the Crawfords, the Baumanns of these latter days, the method is ever the same: in government departments a Turkish pasha for show; and for real work, scientific organisation, and the imagination necessary for reform, a foreign adviser. In such a system the Turkish pasha represents the sanctioning authority and the foreign adviser the directing intelligence. This amounts practically to what we have called elsewhere the system of Civilian Mercenaries.

After the Balkan War of 1912, realising that Turkey was given her last chance, an aged Young Turk minister of Arab descent, Mahmoud Chevket pasha, advocated a remarkable extension of this system. His death is to be deplored, for his moderation and wisdom would probably never have permitted Turkey to adopt what he used contemptuously to designate as a "second-lieutenant's policy," to rush into so wild and disastrous an adventure. Chevket pasha was clear-sighted enough to urge the employment of "civilian mercenaries" even in that department of home affairs, from which hitherto all foreign collaboration had been strictly excluded. He proposed the division of Turkey into vast zones of civil

inspectorship,* at the head of which should be placed conspicuous Western statesmen with extraordinary powers and a long term of office. It is not perhaps generally known that he was desirous of obtaining the collaboration of men as eminent as Lord Milner in England and General Gallieni in France.

Though Mahmoud Chevket pasha was assassinated, his idea was not altogether abandoned. Finding it impossible to carry out Mahmoud Chevket's plan of zones of civil inspection, the Porte, for the first time in Turkish history, nominated a foreign inspector-general, an Englishman, at the Home office. It went further; in the office of the Grand Vizier and even at the Foreign office it nominated a law adviser, a Frenchman, with powers which placed him in a position equal to that of a full Ministerial adviser without any technical qualification. As I have said elsewhere, there were already foreign advisers in all other state departments—justice, finance, public works, agriculture, without counting the army and navy.

The remedy, however, did not prove effective, and for a very simple reason.

* By an adaptation of the German sub-division of the country into zones of military inspectorship.

A French judicial adviser, tired of seeing all his projects for reform pigeon-holed as finally disposed of, sent in his resignation. The heir apparent, Youssouf Izzedin, an ardent and convinced reformer, summoned the Frenchman to his presence and inquired if he would not consent to resume office.

"No, Sir," was the reply.

"And why?"

"Because reform does not merely consist in conceiving plans and expounding them in reports; reforms require to be executed. Now, such a course involves a disturbing of ancient habits, a threatening of established interests, and to overcome the inevitable opposition a reformer must have behind him a power which understands and supports him. That power I do not perceive."

"I will support you," said the Prince.

The Frenchman was embarrassed. He bowed politely without replying.

The cause of his embarrassment was that the poor prince had no power at all. It is equally surprising and certain that since the revolution of 1908, there is no longer any reforming power left in the old Empire. To borrow a picturesque formula from Talleyrand:

*la Révolution a désossé la Turquie.** Formerly that power, insufficient, yet withal appreciable, had been wielded by benevolent tyrants: enlightened sultans like Selim III., who placed their absolute power and their dynastic prestige at the service of the progressive cause. The Young Turks, filled with loathing and hatred of Abdul Hamid's disastrous despotism, carried out their revolution in such a manner as completely and finally to destroy imperial power. The Turkish nation having learned from them that it possessed by right the sovereign power, absorbed so completely the ambrosia of a flattering and unexpected authority, that the Sultan suddenly became a mere puppet, indiscriminately with submissive hand affixing his seal to all decrees and bills which the Sublime Porte sent to him for sanction.

Now the Young Turks never succeeded in substituting themselves for that imperial authority, before which, under Abdul Hamid, every head was bowed in unquestioning obedience.

* The expression, applied by Talleyrand to France naturally, meant that in the years following the French Revolution of 1789, France was lying limp and inert without any centre of resistance and order.

The immemorial custom of a Turkish *tchin*, stationing at every post of authority pashas and beys of high rank, wearing heavily gilded uniforms, elaborately garnished with red or green "grands cordons," had succeeded in inoculating Turkish blood with an inconceivable administrative snobbishness. It was a Governor-General of Erzeroum, if I remember rightly, who, on being promoted to the rank of vizier, the highest in civil *tchin*, conferring the title of *pasha* and giving the right to be addressed as "your excellency," said quite seriously to a consul who was congratulating him: "I have attained the limit of human greatness." In reality a Turkish vizier, under the old régime, was about as much in Turkey as a Duke is in England. As these Turkish dukes were as a rule extremely lazy and very corrupt, the people rejoiced over the destruction of their power. Nevertheless they could not bring themselves to respect the destroyers, for the very reason that they were not dukes. How often have I not heard said of the Home Secretary Talaat: "Talaat! But he is nothing! a mere ex-telegraph clerk!" The flunkeys wanted a duke!

Neither in the Chamber was the authority

of the Young Turks any more pronounced. Certainly they had succeeded in controlling elections and bringing in the official candidates with an art which would have been the envy of our most practised and ripened *préfets*. Neither could they be much to blame for using electioneering practices of doubtful morality. The mentality of the Turkish rank and file resembled that of Vendean or Low Breton peasants in 1789. They were completely dominated by the *hodjas* whose ideal it was to transform Turkey into a kind of sixteenth-century Geneva, in which they would have sent to the scaffold all freemason revolutionaries, with the sombre satisfaction of a Calvin burning Servetus. The 13th of April, 1909, proved this.

Nevertheless, even in this packed Chamber, ideas of reform met with no favourable welcome. It refused, for example, to adopt western time: a large majority preferred to cling passionately to the good old-fashioned time *Alla Turca* which varies every day according to the hour of sunset. Powerful opposition was offered to the project for instituting the post of foreign adviser at the Ministry of Justice. The *hodja* deputies—it had been found impossible to exclude

them altogether—left the hall, with arms uplifted, howling "Islam is betrayed!"

When the deputy Riza Tewfik, an odd but charming visionary, a fervent disciple at once of Persian mystics and of Herbert Spencer, dared to demand in the Chamber liberty of conscience for the Moslems, he barely escaped being throttled in the precincts of the House.

Provincial administration was in a state of terrific anarchy. The commands of the central power, usually well intentioned, in passing through the horrible administrative atmosphere inherited from the Hamidian régime, underwent so strange a distortion as to make them eventually detestable. At the time of the brutal expulsion of the Greeks, in the summer of 1914, Rahmi bey, Governor-General of the Smyrna vilayet, said to me: "What can I do? All the evil comes from irresponsible persons over whom I have no control. My authority does not extend to the military. My *Kaïmmékams* (sub-prefects) if they are active at all, are their accomplices; and when I ask for their dismissal or their recall, Talaat (the Home Secretary) replies: 'I fear that I should only send you worse.'"

At the Sublime Porte, Prince Saïd Halim, a great Egyptian noble, grandson of the

famous Mehemmed Ali, succeeded for a while in imposing his authority, and excellent use he made of it. Negotiations relating to reforms in Armenia came to a happy conclusion; and the definite text of a contract with the inspectors-general presented by the Great Powers, was adopted and signed. A definite understanding with Greece was resolved upon. The Grand Vizier was about to start for Munich, accompanied by the Porte's French adviser, in order to settle the conditions in an interview with M. Venizelos; the date of departure was fixed, the plenary powers were drafted, berths for the members of the mission had been taken on board the steamer, when the thunderbolt of the European War shattered this project like so many others. In this tempest foundered the last semblance of authority. The hand that wielded it, if not possessed of genius, was at least endowed with great common sense.

I have related how completely and rapidly the last Janissaries possessed themselves of power. The Grand Vizier shut himself up in his villa on the Bosphorus. His authority visibly diminished from hour to hour like Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin* in its last days. His French adviser, only restrained by the

Embassy from sending in his resignation, found his duties lamentably easy. In the morning or afternoon, lulled by the slow rhythmic movement of the oars of his caique, he proceeded up the Bosphorus, landed in the Prince's garden, drank a cup of his excellent Egyptian coffee, talked with him for a few moments, asked if there were any business to be attended to, invariably received the answer that there was none, and then, in order to kill as many minutes as possible of those hours of agonising inaction, returned as slowly as he had come.

Meanwhile, Enver and his comrades were mobilising, requisitioning, and on the all-enduring paper remaking the map of the world.

XVI

THOUGH, when considered by themselves, domestic problems arising out of Turkish dullness may appear irremediable because the intelligence which might solve them lacks the support of material force, with external difficulties arising from the same cause the case is quite different. Take Russia, for example. Ever since the day when the lances of Polish knighthood,* at the gates of Vienna, finally checked Turkey's western advance, Russia was for a long time the only Power to suffer, but suffered intensely from Turkish miscomprehension. Nevertheless at all times Russia had at her disposal the power of an empire which is almost a continent. Yet this immense Russian power, because it was neutralised by a component of equal forces in the opposite direction, remained merely potential. For a century the Slav giant experienced the stifling sensation of being

* Led by King Jan Sobieski in 1683.

shut up in the Black Sea. And every time that, tired of being stifled, he made a tremendous effort to break the window thus closed against the air and light of the Mediterranean, his arm was arrested by other arms of equal power: Hunkiar-Iskelessi,* Crimea,† San Stefano;‡ it suffices to mention those names to give a proof of the most important theorem of statics of the ancient system of European mechanics.

But not so very ancient after all. For even after the conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance, of the Entente Cordiale, and, their combination into the Triple Entente by one of the cleverest moves of French Diplomacy, the problem of the Straits remained in the static condition. The Triple Entente, a factor of balance of power with regard to the Powers of the opposite diplomatic tendencies, was itself in a state of equilibrium with regard to the question of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. That question, on the morrow of the Turkish Revolution, Russia attempted to open in London and Paris, thinking that she would there find a favourable solution.

* Treaty between Russia and Turkey, 1833.
† 1854–56.
‡ Treaty closing Russo-Turkish War, 1878.

She was disappointed. Every one considered that such a solution would precipitate the gravest events, probably even the partition of the Ottoman Empire. And neither at Paris nor at London was any one prepared to face such an issue. It was not only that they feared the formidable European conflict to which an operation of such vast scope might give rise, but that they were actuated by powerful considerations both of sentiment and well considered interest. Enormous are the ramifications in Turkey of French finance and industry. These a partition of the Empire might seriously compromise, if not ruin. French educational institutions, both religious and secular, are spreading in Turkey a knowledge of the French language, a sympathy with French views, a friendly acceptance of French influence. What would become of them after a partition? Moreover, many minds still cherished the tradition of a friendly Turkey, a frequent ally since the time of Francis I.*; they were animated by a feeling of sympathy as profound as disinterested for that distant land, the France of the Levant, to which the ties of centuries bound them. To a very large extent such

* See *ante*, p. 47.

sentiments were shared by traditionalist England. Despite the Turkophobe policy inspired by the massacres of 1896, the English Conservative party, with all its social prestige and enormous influence, remained attached to the Beaconsfield dogma of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In a word, though in France and England there was a great liking for Russia, the liking did not extend so far as the sacrifice of Turkey. In the beginning of 1914, notwithstanding the nervousness and irritation brought about by the foolish Panislamistic movements, Sir Edward Grey and M. Poincaré successively, in identical and certainly not concerted words, assured Constantinople that the alarm was totally unfounded and that Turkey might count on the sincere sympathy, the cordial support of Great Britain and of France, at least so long as the Turkish government had no other object than liberal reform and peace. Far more than that, after the Great War had broken out, the ambassadors of England, France and Russia called at the Sublime Porte and officially and solemnly reiterated this assurance, declaring that it had never entered the thoughts of the Allies to avail themselves of their victory to cause the

least infringement on the sovereignty of the Sultan and the territorial integrity of his Empire.

How different were Germany's designs she has herself admitted. The traditions of the house of Prussia would suffice to indicate what would be her plans at such a juncture. For it is well known that this dynasty, with its congenital rapacity, considers as its lawful prey any weak state the spoils of which are worth taking. Founded on the rape of Silesia, the dismemberment of Poland, its greatness was crowned by the annexation of Schleswig, of Hanover, and of Alsace-Lorraine, regardless of the inhabitants' desperate and incessant protestations. But wherefore resort to historic inductions when we have before us indisputable evidence and avowal? In the course of his famous propaganda campaign in the United States, Herr Dernburg made certain declarations with regard to Turkey, to which too little attention has been given. He said quite openly that at peace negotiations Germany intended to claim Turkey from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf as her sphere of influence. How could it have been otherwise? Within the Triple Alliance there was no interior

balance of power, no force to check Prussian greed. And for many a long year Prussia had been attracted by something more than by the beautiful azure skies and waters of the Orient, by those fertile, sunlit lands which have ever been the great attraction for the Barbarians. She saw how the seizure of the Straits and the Suez Canal would for ever imprison Russia in her Black Sea gaol, cut off Great Britain from her communications with India, and thus at one blow ruin not only England and Russia but place at Prussia's mercy France their ally. This calculation was so obvious that there was not the slightest reason to dissimulate it beneath the usual diplomatic circumlocutions. Consequently Herr Dernburg did not scruple to state it with the utmost cynicism and in all its baldness.

This, therefore, would be Turkey's fate if Germany were victorious. The Turks, who are at present in a position to appreciate the tact and gentleness with which the Germans treat them, now that, having need of them, they pose as intimate friends, may imagine the delights of that intensive *Kultur* which will be applied to them, when the Barbarians, having upset to their own advantage the

world balance of power, relinquish the courtier's for the master's rôle. My ears still resound with the brutal and contemptuous words used of the Turks, during the Balkan War, by their German instructors, at a time when these good masters never suspected that a day would soon come when it would be to their advantage once more to flatter their pupils.

Such a situation, which the youngest embassy attaché would have been ashamed not to have seized at a glance, was utterly beyond the Janissaries. Intoxicated with Teutonic *hasheesh*, forgetful of the services rendered to them, ignoring a historical tradition which should have been an instinctive impulse towards self-preservation, the Turks ranged themselves against France, Great Britain, and Russia in the deadly struggle of these powers against the Cimbrians and the Teutons, and, hoping to provoke a formidable rising among their co-religionaries in Asia and Africa, proclaimed the Holy War.

The direct consequence of this folly was evidently to destroy for ever that equilibrium in the Triple Entente which had been the sole but assured factor of salvation for Turkey. If Germany were victorious, Turkey

would have been devoured. But if Germany were beaten and Turkey had remained grateful, or loyal, or simply correct in her attitude, neither the plighted word of Western diplomacy nor public opinion in England and France would have permitted the slightest attaint on her independence. But such an attitude vanished before the attack on Egypt, the bloodshed of the Dardanelles,—more generally and more simply, assistance given to the Power that tortured Belgium and seven French provinces, utterly changed the system. Henceforth Franco-British power ceases to counteract that of Russia. Community of suffering and of danger unite the three members of the Entente and direct their power in the same sense, against Turkey. Further, Italy, exasperated in her turn, declares war on the Ottoman Empire. Thus there came about the extraordinary historical event: Turkish incomprehension has accomplished the miracle of uniting against her all the combatants of the Crimean war. So that now Russia, France, England, and now also Italy, in one common effort, strive to dispel the absurd suffering, the unwarrantable danger, and to render its recurrence impossible, by creating a new situation and such that never

again shall they be exposed to danger and hardship by some whim of primitive and impulsive brains wielding redoubtable power.

The purpose is decided. The objective is certain. It only remains to consider the diverse methods by which it may be attained.

XVII

Of these methods we will begin by putting aside the worst, what we would call the method of apportioning of cattle, no other appropriate expression being conceivable.

Not long ago the various countries of Europe were regarded as mere pasture-lands for the most valuable of all cattle, for those which yield money and military force as others do meat, wool and milk. For the conquest of this invaluable human capital the possession of which brought the honour of being a prince and the pleasure of being a millionaire, blood flowed in oceans from the Channel to the Baltic, from the mouth of the Vistula to the delta of the Nile. When the fighting had lasted long enough, when the killing was deemed sufficient, the agents of the great landowners sat round a green-baize covered table and sharply discussed the redistribution of human capital. For alone the allotment mattered. Once it was

done there only remained to make the cattle work and keep it in subjection. And this was generally effected, not of course by the idyllic means of gentle shepherds and crooks, but by governors, clever and heartless, a strongly organised political police, a thorough obscurantist policy, and, for extreme cases, bayonets and the batteries of good garrisons suitably distributed.

The chief consideration was naturally the number of heads. When Murat received from Napoleon as a gift the grand duchy of Berg, he was congratulated on the value of the gift. It represented 420,000 heads, yielding after deducting the cost of administration, or, in other words, after all friends had been comfortably installed in well-paid sinecures, a revenue of 800,000 florins or 1,600,000 francs, and could furnish two regiments. But only novices were content with such superficial evaluations. Prussian business men, in particular, had a gift for more exhaustive and practical analysis. Would any one with a head on his shoulders so far forget himself as to confound the value of one hundred head of cows from Les Landes with a hundred from Normandy? In 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, when 8,300,000 heads

had to be found to indemnify Prussia for her losses in human cattle during the Napoleonic Wars, something like the requisite number was finally arrived at by gleaning here and there, in Hanover, in Saxony, and ingenuously the indemnity collectors presumed to complete it by adding a considerable proportion of Poles. This occasioned a most noisy protest. "Do you imagine you can deceive us?" cried out the Prussians in a fury. "Do you pretend that a Pole's head is worth the head of a native of Cologne or Aix-la-Chapelle?" "We beg your pardon," replied the Russian agents, "you forget that the Posnanian Poles, whom we are offering you, give a better revenue than the Poles of Wlodawa that we have to keep in our lot."

Finally, these liquidators bowed to the shrewd wisdom of Prussia, and a commission was nominated charged to determine the value of the various lots by taking into consideration not merely quantity but quality, *i.e.* the yield in fiscal milk of each respective lot of human cattle.

Such grimly humorous matters are indeed historical facts, serious and important historical facts. Let him who doubts convince himself of the wound in the side of Europe

by looking through the protocols of the Vienna Congress or by simply reading *Le Consulat et l'Empire* by Thiers, a work more easily accessible. But this is very antiquated history, history as dead and gone, although barely a century old, as that of those early peoples of the East, whose hazy records seem to bring one face to face with the characters of legend. In presence of the awakened consciences of nations how quaint and remote a figure is cut by such personages as Hardenberg, Metternich, even Talleyrand! It will ever redound to the honour of the Latin spirit that French and Italian jurisconsults and politicians were the first to reduce this system to the position of a curious relic in the museum of the human mind, to have transformed it into something like those rusty instruments of torture, which amaze visitors to mediæval dungeons. To these clear-sighted and noble innovators is due the introduction into human conscience, if not into actual and general practice, of the contrary system, the principle of nationalities. This principle involves the idea that if from the purely fiscal and military point of view a nation may be regarded as so many head of cattle, it is cattle with heart and brains capable of thought and of

suffering. Hence, no one has a right, merely in order to secure political interests, to wound them in their habits, their traditions, their faith, or their historical tendencies; indeed not even in endeavouring to repel unjust and dangerous suffering has one the right to inflict suffering on any mass of mankind, faulty in the person of its leaders, save just so far as is necessary for the achievement of that lawful aim.

Of that antiquated system, now practised in Europe by Prussia alone, I should not have even spoken had not the word "partition" often used in connection with the Turkish question evoked conceptions quite erroneous because quite out of date. It is important to point out that this method of apportioning of human cattle, morally doomed, would, if applied to the Turkish question, prove as it always has proved in the past, needlessly painful, consequently dangerous, and, further, especially disastrous from the French point of view.

We will give a few examples: first, that of Constantinople.

XVIII

CONSTANTINOPLE is the key to the Straits. I have endeavoured to show how vital it is for Russian interests that this key should be held by a thoroughly reliable hand. I may add that after the magnificent effort of the Russians and their terrific sufferings, it would be ungrateful, iniquitous, and withal politically unwise, considering what is likely to be the future grouping of the Powers, to grudge her a satisfaction which would be also a deliverance. Further, I may add, as the result of an impartial experience, that the pure Russian is one of the finest types of men, kind-hearted, cordially hospitable, débonnaire, and moreover deeply intelligent and artistic. But, granting all this, consider the consequences of any out-and-out transference to Russia of the people of Constantinople and of the two banks of the Straits, of the transformation of the city of Constantinople into what has been described as "a Russian provincial town." Later, it will

be easily understood to what extent the suffering occasioned by this proceeding would be unnecessary; let us now point out to what extent it would be intense.

Constantinople is essentially a very ancient Greek and Greek-speaking city. Both the history of Thucydides and the speeches of Demosthenes contain references to Byzantium. On this old Greek city other cities have been successively superimposed: in 1453, a Turkish-speaking city of officials; in the sixteenth century a French-speaking city of foreign business men. As Russian diplomacy in Turkey has never been anything but purely political, and in no way economic or financial, there are practically no Russians in Turkey. Except at the Russian Embassy and Consulate, in the offices of the Russian Navigation Company and in the Russian Bank, established since the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, no one in Constantinople speaks a word of Russian or knows anything of Russian law. The intrusion of a purely Russian personnel in the old capital of the Hellenised Roman Emperors and the Sultans, allies of the "Emperors of France," an administrative personnel proceeding to administer the imperial city as

it would administer Nicolaiev or Ekaterinoslav, would bring about the most incredible chaos. The utter dismay of the inhabitants of Constantinople if they beheld the overthrow of their most venerable habits by the sudden domination of a people, whose language, laws, and manner of administration are alike completely foreign and unknown in the town, can only be likened to the bewilderment of the inhabitants of Paris if they were to awaken some morning to find themselves under the administration of the Japanese. Of the distress which would be felt by the Turks I do not speak: from apprehension of such a fate proceeds that furious defensive which amazes French soldiers. But such a solution of the Turkish question would grieve and agitate not Ottomans alone, but all the various races of Turkey: Greeks, Armenians, even foreigners, not excepting French colonists. The Greeks especially, the most ancient inhabitants of the soil, would be inconsolable, and would lament their tongue, their schools, the privileges of their Patriarchate, unimpaired since 1453, with all the passionate grief of the Jews of Jerusalem, sobbing along the wall of the Temple polished smooth by age-long contact with their weeping countenances.

Now, take a second example: Syria.

If, for the past four centuries, it may be said that France has been the chief civilising power in Turkey taken as a whole, it is especially true regarding the Turkish province of Syria. There is no corner of foreign land where French influence has been more ancient and more apparent. The ruins of the castles of Godefroy de Bouillon and his peers still cover the summits of most Syrian hills. In 1860, on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, French blood flowed in the cause of humanity and justice.* The harbours, roads, and railways of Syria were all constructed by Frenchmen. In the towns, the French language may be heard at every street corner. But we must be under no illusions. Old Syria, become profoundly Arabic since the remote period of the Ommiades in the eighth century—Moslem in majority—would give anything but a friendly greeting to an annexation pure and simple and the partition of this aggregate of ancient kingdoms into four or five French *départements*.

It is indeed most seeming that even the

* To protect the Maronite Christians threatened with massacre by the neighbouring heretical Moslem tribe of Druses.

Christian Maronites of the Mountain, released by a French army from the nightmare of incessant massacres, even the Catholics of the towns, who are the most devoted in French sympathy, would not accept with a light heart the disappearance of their personal nationality, of which they have the most sensitive consciousness. As regards the Moslems, with whom would immediately join the Druses—and this is the particularly fighting element of the population—none but those who know nothing of their feelings would hesitate to believe that they would oppose a furious and relentless resistance and that it would be a repetition of the history of Algeria.

Finally, such a settlement would involve the complete collapse of French interests in Turkey. For in return for the opportunity of securing in Syria berths for a few prefects, several sub-prefects, and the long train of their clerical attendants, it is easy to realise what France would lose. Then, truly, would be justified the apprehensions that the word partition has always evoked in France. From the rest of vanished Turkey would also have vanished French finance, industry, educational institutions, the French language, the high and noble position acquired as the

result of the work of long generations of Frenchmen—in a word, it would be the collapse of the monument of very profitable, but very noble and very beneficial influence, that French intelligence and energy strove during four centuries to erect, and finally did erect, and which was truly worthy to be more lasting than bronze. The heart bleeds and common sense is outraged at the idea that French boys should fall in the fatal triangle of Gallipoli to bring about the ruin of France in the Levant. From their early graves it behoves that a dawn should arise and not a dusk.

Does this mean that nothing should be done? that, to speak like the lawyers, everything should remain *in statu?* By no means. The principle remains. The question lies in the method of enforcing it. If there be a bad and a barbarous method, that of the allotment of the human cattle to the various Powers, there is also a good and tried method: that of the guardianship, which, combined with the play of the principle of nationalities, would, while inflicting the least suffering and consequently provoking the least resistance, conciliate all the various interests and all the various sentiments which are involved.

XIX

One meets in the world a curious type of humanity, men sometimes personally very attractive and who would be the most harmless and truly the most delightful had they not a hole in their brains, through which, as easily as water through a sieve, escapes any fortune of which they may be possessed.

Their case is the exact contrary of the legendary Greek king; in their hands gold turns to silver, silver to copper, copper into nothing at all. Hence they become veritable pests, the terror and the scourge of their families; no patrimony can stand before the onslaught of such devourers of bank-notes. In times when civil law was as rudimentary and barbarous as is still international law (for, as every one knows, as far as the latter is concerned, we have not advanced beyond the ordeal by single combat, by water, fire or even asphyxiating gas) it is not impossible that custom may have authorised the relatives

of such spendthrifts to kill them or imprison them for life in a dungeon and divide their inheritance, which would otherwise have been dissipated. But the custom must have been extremely ancient, for history bears no trace of it. As for modern civil law, reasonably careful to forget nothing essential but equally to exaggerate nothing which is useless, it has instituted a proceeding, which, though milder, is extremely efficacious. It permits spendthrifts to enjoy what apparently is complete independence. They seem to lead a free and pleasant life; well dressed and well fed, moving from place to place as health or pleasure dictate, they count among the world's highly favoured. But should you ask them to take some decision bearing on the disposal of their estates, they would smile awkwardly and change the subject. The law, with the object of preventing inheritances from passing out of the family, has intervened and filled up the hole in the spendthrift's brain with the grey matter of an honest notary or solicitor. Animated by the most prudent notions of domestic economy and acting in the interest of the defective person as well as in those of his family and of society, this excellent lawyer, holds the

purse-strings in a hand at once discreet, courteous, and invincibly strong; for behind this meek-looking adviser, ready if need be to enforce his salutary counsels, is arrayed all the formidable apparatus of law and order, from the humble policeman to the head of the State.

The principle of nationalities is for international law what the principle of individual liberty is for civil law. It is the assertion that the collective unit has as much right to respect as the personal. But it represents nothing more, and it is highly important that it should represent nothing more. In those remote days of the Holy Alliance,* of the Congress of Troppau, of Laibach, of Verona,† loathing for an odiously arbitrary and oppressive policy suggested as an indispensable corollary, the principle of non-intervention.

* 1815.

† It will be remembered that the Congresses of Troppau, Laibach and Verona (1820–1822) were convened for the purpose of supporting throughout Europe, even by military intervention if necessary, the severely reactionary principles which had been agreed upon by the Sovereigns party to the "Sainte Alliance." Notably at the congress of Verona, with which is unfortunately associated the great name of Chateaubriand, was initiated the purpose of a French military intervention in Spain with the object of crushing the Spanish Liberals who were rising against King Ferdinand of sad memory.

The case was very badly put. A burglar has no right of intervention with regard to our safe or the sideboard in which we keep our silver plate; but if a right of intervention was denied to the judge or the policeman, social order would become impossible. Now, as in every nation there exists an organised community of individuals, so humanity should include an organised community of nations. To admit the unconditional freedom of action, the absolute and irresponsible independence of individual nations, which, being powerful, may also be dangerous, would be to despair of this reasonable organisation of the world and consequently of the future of humanity.

Therefore, the idea of the interdependence of states daily becomes more and more a recognised principle of international law. Jurisconsults have already, though in too timid tones, pronounced the words: "intervention on behalf of humanity." They begin to admit that if a state rashly occasions suffering, danger or bloodshed, it is as guilty towards humanity, towards the States concerned, as is an individual who dissipates his fortune. And, identical defects demanding identical remedies, we find that the

history of the last forty years abounds in the appointment of political guardians.

That organised by Russia in Turkestan has been highly praised. That of Tunis is an unqualified success. But I shall only speak of what I have personally seen and what appeared to me a perfect model of its kind.

To any one landing, as I did, in Egypt, about 1898, the Egyptian state appeared as free from restraint as those spendthrifts under guardianship to whom we have referred above. There was an Egyptian head of the government, holding a sovereign's rank, a council of Egyptian ministers, Egyptian functionaries and tribunals, an Egyptian army, an Egyptian police in the streets of Alexandria and Cairo. Native traditions were everywhere respected. Interference even with that local colour so dear to artists was avoided. Nevertheless no one even slightly acquainted with the Moslem East would fail to detect a something which was extremely and most agreeably unusual: streets remarkably clean, uniforms well cut and smartly worn, a general appearance of order, security, and wealth. A more detailed and profound examination revealed a well-organised administration of justice, widely developed commercial under-

takings, enormous increase in the value of land and building property. Even if its institution had not been very well known, the existence of a political guardianship would have been guessed at once by its obvious and marvellous results.

As in the Turkey of yesterday, in each of the chief government departments was a foreign adviser. Only behind this adviser there existed, not a force blindly tyrannical or childishly impulsive, sometimes supporting, sometimes thwarting him, paralysing all methodical continuity of action, but the force at once intelligent and irresistible of one of the most civilised and most liberal nations of old Europe. And that force was represented by a man of high distinction,* who concealed his really sovereign power beneath the modest title of Consul-General.

I know few more complete examples of the practice of the Principle of Least Suffering. That there might have been some in Egypt who suffered from this state of things—not in their person, which of course was respected, nor in their property equally respected and indeed much increased in value, but in what

* The late Lord Cromer, Consul-General in Egypt, 1883–1907.

may be called their political conceit I am willing to admit. But who were they? The ruling class whose incapacity had determined the appointment of the political guardian, and who for that guardian might have the stolid aversion that guardians not unusually inspire in spendthrifts. But as a result of this Least Suffering, not only the Greater Suffering, the suffering of the Egyptian people and of the interested States had completely disappeared, but the sum of general happiness had increased in incredible proportions. The miserable fellahs of earlier days, the peasants of the banks of the Nile, now paying fixed and moderate taxes, honestly collected, cultivating well-irrigated fields, approached by roads and railways, enjoy a calm and a prosperity never dreamed of in the whole history of Egypt. The landowners were making huge fortunes out of the increased value of their property. The business of banks and commercial houses at Alexandria and Cairo attained unheard of figures. Egyptian officials and officers were paid liberally and with mathematical punctuality. And all the while their own language remained in official as in private use: their religion

was respected: on that threefold foundation of Moslem private life: the mosque, the harem and the hammam, no one thought of laying a finger. A few high functionaries whose blue eyes and fair mustache contrasted quaintly with their high red *tarboosh:* here and there the tartan kilts and bare legs of Highland soldiers walking through the streets of old Cairo seemed the only changes in the sometime *pashalik* of Mehemmed-Ali. And in reality nothing was altered in Egypt. There were only a few more brains in the right place. But, as our English friends say, that "made all the difference." That would also "make all the difference" in Turkey, or rather in that geographical expression, that mosaic of nations and divers habitats which constitutes the Ottoman Empire.

To give concrete illustrations of this theory, we will return to our former examples: Syria and Constantinople.

SOUTH of the Taurus and of Kurdistan, in the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Turkish Empire, the Turks have really no business to be, and this view can avail itself of a valuable evidence, that of those Young-Turk statesmen who showed themselves most intelligently patriotic.

Though politically fanatical, in religion the Turk is not in the least bigoted. In the whole of Turkish history there is not a single example of a massacre instigated by religious hatred. But among Arabs it is very different, and at the Sublime Porte the administration of the vilayet of Beyrouth has always been regarded as extremely difficult on account of the perpetual fear of explosions of religious fury between men of the same race, or at any rate of the same language and professing to be of the same nationality. Nevertheless, after the Revolution of 1908, there occurred

in the Turkish Parliament an extraordinary and deeply significant incident. The fiery religious fanaticism of the Arabs actually gave way before the fervour of racial feeling. The Turkish deputies, having obtained an overwhelming majority by packing the Chamber, had assumed an irreconcilably Chauvinist attitude towards the question of local liberties, of language especially. Thereupon seventy-two Arab deputies, nearly all Moslems, joined hands with the heterogeneous opposition formed not only of Albanians, their fellow-believers, but of Christians, Serbians, Bulgars, and Greeks.

This incident will not, however, seem wholly illogical to those who remember that in race, language, and spirit Turks differ as widely from Arabs as Russians from Italians. It must also be recollected that in the Arab lands conquered by the Turks in the sixteenth century, the conquerors never made the slightest attempt to assimilate with the conquered, that the régime of the Turkish commandery, the little group of foreign officials disdainful of the language and traditions of the natives and maintaining itself only by armed force, persists in all its rigour to the present day. Such conditions completely

explain the position of the Arabic group in the Turkish Parliament.

Even Young Turk nationalism * for once opened its eyes and saw how lawful and logical were the demands of the Arab members. Accordingly, the best among the Young Turks conceived a generous and wise design, which was also extremely bold, considering the milieu in which it was brought forward. They proposed to introduce into the Ottoman Empire that dualist system which regulates relations between Austria and Hungary. This scheme would have divided Turkey into two: Turkish Turkey and Arabic Turkey, ruled by one dynasty, with a common army and diplomatic corps, but for the rest governed by distinct administrative bodies, of different languages, Turkish on this side of the Taurus, Arabic on the other. Committees, instituted according to the model of the Delegations in the Austro-Hungarian Compromise would discuss the common national budget.

The project was not carried out; and the

* For the origin and objects of Turkish nationalism described by an ardent Pro-German, see *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal*, by Tekin Alp (*i.e.* Albert Cohen, a Macedonian Jew), Weimar, Gustav Riepenhauer, 1915. English version by Admiralty Intelligence Department, 1917.

reason is extremely interesting. The few choice Turkish spirits with whom the idea originated would doubtless have experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining for it the support of the proud and unintelligent majority. But the main difficulty came from the Arabs themselves. A few, with that petty southern vanity which is one of their racial failings, objected that, being more numerous and wealthy than the Turks, they did not see how they were to profit from a system which would disappoint their hope of one day dominating over the whole Empire. But the objections of the majority were much more serious and striking. Devoid of all political experience, because for so long they had been kept by the Turks out of all important public office, the Arabs were addicted to that racial vice of sanguinary family and clan feuds which in Asia, aggravating religious dissensions, hurled the Ommiades against the Alides, the Abbasides against the Ommiades, the Haridjites against the Abbasides, and in Spain did far more to ruin Moslem domination than ever the arms of the Cid's companions. Their political inexperience, united to innate suspiciousness, now caused them to fear that in an autonomy

so sudden and unlimited they were being offered a dangerous and perhaps a fatal gift. And they confined themselves to more modest demands, amounting to local military service, the recognition and use of Arabic as the official administrative language, and in every department of the administration the appointment of foreign advisers with extensive powers and a long term of office.

The wisdom of such a scheme is not surprising. It may partly be explained by a very striking fact which for half a century had attracted a good deal of attention. The only corner of Syria which could be described as prosperous was the Lebanon district, ruled by a governor nominated under the direct control of the enlightened West. Of two contiguous estates, one in the Lebanon, protected by Europe, the other in the purely Turkish vilayet of Beyrouth or Damascus, the first, as every one knew, was worth four or five times as much as the second. Moreover, Arab intelligence, even among the most uncultured classes, is marvellously acute. One example of this I shall never forget.

XXI

It happened that in 1911, at the time of the Karak Arab rising, I was visiting an old friend, a Druse Emir. He came of an ancient and illustrious stock. For many years he had been governor of a vast province, covered with Bedouin tents. From dawn till dark he would ride ceaselessly occupied with the duties of his hard and dangerous calling. In the evening his recreation was to read Herbert Spencer and the newspaper to which he subscribed, *l'Humanité*,* for this descendant of the Kings of Hira was a socialist.

After the Revolution, having been elected deputy for Lattakieh and living at Constantinople, he had sheltered two rebel sheikhs, one of whom occupied the important position of chieftain of the powerful tribe of the Rualâ. He introduced me to them. They were superb specimens of the traditional desert type: dark burning eyes set in im-

* The chief organ of the French Socialist party, founded by Jaurès, now edited by Marcel Cachin.

passive bronze faces, hard, clear of line, noble and lean. Large black *aghals* bound the white *kefiyeh* on to their foreheads; over their shoulders fell the ample brown *djoubbeh* of camel hair; on their bare legs were red boots.

As illiterate as certain knights of the Middle Ages boasted to be, these knights of the desert nevertheless expounded their grievances clearly, even eloquently, in excellent language. They complained of the Turkish governor of Damascus and of his acolytes, of the arbitrary and useless interference with ancient traditions, of the breaking of pledges given by a succession of sultans, and worst of all, of rudeness.

"*Ya Sîdî*," said one of them, his face calm but his hands trembling, "those men, not one of whom knows who was his grandfather, dare to keep us standing in front of them, when we come to make our complaint, and if we speak too long, they dismiss us with a wave of the hand, crying: '*Ah siktir*' (untranslatable). It is insufferable."

"This may change," I said, to try him.

"Allah is uniquely wise," he replied politely. "But——" And with his finger he struck his forehead,

"And if it does not change?" I continued.

Then he answered, word for word, the following:—

"By Allah, we shall try with the foreigner. I have been to Aden. There everything is good and well ordered."

Aden, a place which British officers loathe, Aden, that most unbeloved of garrison towns, seemed by comparison good and well ordered to this Bedouin Sheikh, brought up in the primitive immensity of the desert, but gifted with an insight which enabled him to appreciate the advantages of civilisation and European administrative guidance.

One should always beware of attaching too great importance to words which may only be the expression of a passing mood. But these, notwithstanding, provide food for thought. Whether in the immense Mesopotamian Basin, or in the plains and valleys of Syria and Palestine, the intelligent Arab population, perfectly aware and utterly weary of the disastrous absurdity of the régime to which it is subjected, pines for order, for justice, or, in other words, for elementary equity and administrative common sense.

If, for fear of anarchy and of ferocious civil war, the Arabs were ready, humbly,

to continue to submit to the hard and rudimentary Turkish domination, provided that its defects were counteracted by the brains of Western advisers, how much more readily would they not accept a foreign political guardianship of high culture coming to guide an Arab administration, on condition, of course, that the guardianship acted discreetly and, above all, politely. To be polite is so easy, so pleasant, so wonderfully useful, that one fails to understand how some people can take such pleasure in being rude. It is obviously difficult to win the heart of the Arabs by treating them as underlings and by greeting them with harsh language and sometimes, piteous as it may be to say, even with blows. But how generously does the gentlemanly heart of the Arab respond directly he is treated as the representative of an ancient, noble, and fine race, directly he realises that one knows his history, that one respects his religion, that one is not entirely ignorant of the treasures of his magnificent literature, that he is treated socially with the consideration due to equals. How many Arab difficulties have originated in nothing but the ignorant and brutal rudeness of the officials commissioned to rule them!

Stated in terms still more concrete, the problem of Syria and of Palestine does not appear particularly embarrassing. It is a country containing a Moslem majority and an important Christian minority. The Moslems of rank and importance, much more strongly attached to Islam, whose scriptures they read and re-read, than the Turks, ignorant of the ritual tongue, are also all eager for authority and honours, the Turks having deprived them of both for centuries. The Christians and Jews who count, all engaged in banking or the liberal professions, merely and simply desire peace, security, and a good administration which shall favour the country's economic development instead of paralysing it. As for France, her language and civilisation have been known there so long, and her beneficent power has been respected through so many centuries, that for her the task seems both honourable and easy. A French guardianship which, considerate of the national aspirations, would enthrone at Damascus, venerated by the Arabs as the ancient capital of the Ommiades, a local dynasty, either Arab—and this might possibly be delicate, since, the Shereef of Mecca put apart and above, there exists no Arab

house of unanimously acknowledged hereditary superiority,—or Turkish—a Prince of the House of Osman would certainly be respected, and there exist in the Ottoman dynasty Princes much to be appreciated and esteemed; a guardianship that would open wide to the Arabs the career of civil and military service, with the exception of posts of high control and of advisers of whom they themselves demand the institution; that would scrupulously respect Islam and its institutions, the diverse rights of the Christians, the Arabic language, equally beloved by Christians and by Moslems; which would, in a word, purely and simply maintain the administrative and social *statu quo* while restoring to the Arabs the position that was for a long time withheld from them, and while introducing into this state of things method, order, physical and moral cleanness, intelligence, conscience, and speed in the distribution of justice and the conduct of business: such a guardianship, any man having any experience of the East will concur, would be accepted—apart from the inevitable opposition of the wounded *amour propre* of a certain class—not only without any appreciable resistance, but with a feeling

of universal relief and, further, of universal satisfaction.

There are many reasons for believing that, Russia in Constantinople, by the adoption of the same methods, would arrive at the same results, at the same time attaining her ancient and capital objective.

XXII

A PICTURESQUE and precise formula of this objective was vividly impressed upon my mind by a chance conversation.

In 1912, at a luncheon party at the Russian Embassy, at Constantinople, I met a singularly charming and delightful person, a Monsieur B——. Very well born, wealthy, a former officer of the Guard, allied to a family of supreme diplomatic distinction, he was consumed by a disinterested and daring fanaticism. He was keen on Panslavism as one would be on polo. Woe to any one who opposed his hobby. Minister or ambassador, no matter, Monsieur B. rode down upon him at full tilt, cutting and thrusting with a freedom of speech or of pen such as could only be permitted to a spoilt child of the highest Petrograd society. But all the while he never forgot to be perfectly courteous, absolutely sincere, and so winning as to disarm the severest censure.

He deplored the impossibility of any

understanding with the Turks, quite good fellows, he declared, in many respects. Between Russians and Turks the Straits Question opened a veritable abyss.

"But," I suggested, "there are certain enlightened Turks who are prepared to accept a solution analogous to that which has so excellently settled the Suez Canal Question. And this idea is gaining ground at Stamboul."

"Ah," said Monsieur B., smiling, "we shall never be content with an opening of the Straits on paper."

"And what do you call 'an opening on paper'?" I asked.

"Any opening which fails to put the key into our pockets."

That which, in 1912, was but the ideal, the dream of a few impassioned Panslavists, has become a definite objective after which the entire Russian nation strives.* Happiness is never conceived but under the shape of the possible. Some two years ago, at Petrograd, and at Moscow, the possession of the Straits seemed so remote as to be nothing more than a counsel of perfection.

* Written in December, 1915, very nearly two years before the Russian revolution. The reader is referred to the Introduction.

The folly of Enver and his comrades in precipitating Turkey into the European *mêlée* at the heel of Germany against Russia and her Allies, Belgium, England, and France, suddenly converted this dream into a realisable possibility. Henceforth it has become an imperious ardent desire, inflamed by the cruel suffering and danger occasioned in Russia at war by the closing of the Dardanelles.

The Russians describe their feeling in this matter by this striking simile: "The Straits! they are our Alsace-Lorraine!"

More than one British war correspondent has found this obsession animating humble *moujiks* transformed into soldiers. They fight to place the key of the Straits in the Russian pocket, as our soldiers fight that the tricolour may again wave over Metz and Strasbourg. And this object has grown into a very considerable psychological fact, which it is impossible to ignore, for it now comes to be the main pivot of the Turkish Question.

This being admitted, a hypothesis may be conceived. It does not present the drawback that most hypotheses involve of being arbitrary and futile, because it can be constructed exactly and entirely with

symmetrical points of a political situation unfortunately as real as possible. Imagine Russia occupying at Constantinople the position which Enver pasha has now finally accorded to Germany. Imagine in the forts commanding the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles Russian instead of German officers and gunners; in the Golden Horn, not the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* with a German admiral, but the *Koutouzov* and the *Kiev*—if Russian dreadnoughts bear such names—with a Russian admiral. Imagine in the place of the Prince von Hohenlohe as adviser to the Turkish government, M. de Giers, for instance—all this being mere hypothesis—and as head of a military mission and inspector-general of the army, in the place of Liman von Sanders, General Broussilov; in the various government departments, foreign advisers, as certain of having their advices accepted if they happen to agree with M. de Giers as now are the German advisers when their opinions are shared by the Prince of Hohenlohe.* With that exception nothing changed: the Sultan at Dolma-Baghtche, the imperial princes in their villas on the Bosphorus, the Sheikh-ul-Islam at

* German Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte in 1915.

Stamboul, the Greek Patriarch at Fanar, the Armenian Patriarch at Koum-Kapou; government offices, *lycées*, schools, hospitals, banks, the various industries going on as of old without any drastic or arbitrary interference in the question of languages, laws, and personnel. What would be the result?

Even Monsieur B., I surmise, would cease to talk of an opening of the Straits on paper. For it is perfectly evident that such a settlement would place the key of the Straits in Russia's pocket. The German analogy of the present day proves it. Let it not be objected that a situation such as the Germans occupy at Constantinople is precarious because reposing on the temporary contracts by which foreign advisers hold office. In such matters it is the situation *de facto* and not *de jure* which, wrongly perhaps, but invincibly counts in the long run. On the 30th of October, 1914, after the attack on the Russian Black Sea ports, when the ambassadors of the Entente had announced their departure, the Ottoman cabinet and the delegates of the Young Turk party, as the result of an anxious deliberation, endeavoured to induce the ambassadors to remain by offering to disown the action of the war-ships which had

conducted the attack, to make an apology, to pay Russia an indemnity, to bottle up the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. In favour of this arrangement Djavid bey pleaded long and earnestly. But he could obtain nothing but the reply: "That is not enough. You must dismiss the Germans. As politely as you will, and merely for the duration of the war, if you wish it. But go they must."

Thereupon ensued another anxious deliberation. And finally came the reply: "We cannot."

Of course not. The capital was exposed to the fire of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. The Straits artillery was in the hands of Prussian gunners: the staff, the commissariat, the *cadres* were all under the direct control of Liman von Sanders and his colleagues. Henceforth the Germans could not be driven from Constantinople save at the cannon's mouth.

It is clear, however, that a durability not to be ensured by a temporary contract can be effected by a treaty. There is nothing novel in our hypothesis. It would be but a franker and more detailed replica of the Treaty of Hunkiar-Iskelessi. And if it be objected that the duration of the treaty was

very brief, I would submit that the reason was the opposition of France and England, an opposition which, in the present conjuncture, would be changed into an obvious adhesion and corroboration.

By such an arrangement not only would Russia attain her primary object, but—and this is highly important—she would attain it in the manner most equitable, most considerate of all interests involved, including our own, and therefore the manner most easy and smooth.

XXIII

THE solution suggested in the last chapter would, as we have said, be the most equitable. It is obvious. The famous saying, "Truth this side of the Pyrénées, error beyond" (*Vérité au decà des Pyrénées, erreur au delà*),* was worded not as an axiom, but as a bitter rebuke. If we are right in giving ourselves out as the champions of the Latin principle of nationalities as opposed to the Teutonic principle of the apportionment of human cattle, what reasons could reason know of reversing this table of values on the day when our troops advance to within sight of the white minarets and embattled ramparts of Byzantium? "Ludicrous justice if to be limited by a river" (*Plaisante justice qu'une rivière borne*).†

Revolting as is the Turkish crime of ingratitude and folly, and aggravated, as it

* Pascal, in the "Pensées," as everybody will remember.
† Pascal again in the "Pensées."

has been, by the oceans of Armenian blood shed in Asia, it is not a national crime. Recall the conditions of the rupture: how the Ottoman dynasty, the enlightened civilians of Stamboul, with quasi-unanimity, the immense mass of Anatolian peasants, submitted in bewilderment and sorrow to the felony of German officers and to the incomprehension of that last Agha of the Janissaries, Enver pasha. Since then, on two occasions, the Grand Vizier, or Turkish Prime Minister, has endeavoured to enter into communication with us with the purpose of negotiating a separate peace with the Entente. Recently, on the reassembling of the Turkish parliament at Stamboul, there arose in the Chamber and in the Senate such vehement protestations against the war, against the hanging of Arab patriots, against the Armenian massacres, that the Home Secretary, Talaat bey, the civil *alter ego* of Enver pasha, wished to order the arrest of fifty-two deputies, and among them that personification of positivist Young Turkey, Ahmed Riza bey himself. This impulsive tribune's violence was only restrained by the intervention of the heir apparent, Youssouf Izzeddin, who since paid for his well-known sympathies with his blood.

When the German fist, stripped of its velvet glove, began to hold Constantinople, when Mackensen, the Bavarian battalions, Prussian under-secretaries of state and police officials threatened to set out on that progress towards the Persian Gulf announced by Herr Dernburg, Talaat himself, if despatches speak true, began to understand the magnitude of his error. Then he began to struggle desperately against Enver within the meshes of the deadly net in which the Turkish colossus—the colossus with a head of clay—is entangled.

The Turks, on the other hand, are in no way comparable with those unfortunate tribes of America and Australia, late in culture by a whole geological period, impervious to any guidance or culture, and whom it is deemed justifiable to abandon to a slow death from alcohol, want and misery in the reserved territories that a superior civilisation grants to them in interested charity.

Because, considered in the mass, the Turks are neither intellectuals nor business men, it would be a mistake to draw the conclusion that this brave and disciplined nation of complicated, harmonious and courtly language, of grave and polite manners, with women good and dignified in the lower classes,

very attractive and of the most refined distinction in the upper classes, constitutes a despicable and negligible nonentity.

If there is a hole in the Turkish brain, that brain also presents appreciable protuberances. The administration of a great country would be impossible if, in the agglomeration of inhabitants, under the resplendent veneer of thinkers, artists, politicians and financiers, there did not exist a stolid but firm substratum of very simple men, courageous without calculation, obedient without after-thought, prepared easily to abandon a life of which the ideal was not merely to accumulate capital or to occupy journalists. In the East, this useful and humble substratum is represented by the Turks. Incompetent as leaders, at whiles odious—as is abundantly demonstrated by the repeated massacres in Armenia—those born "poilus" show themselves excellent when under orders, and are without doubt the most honest and docile peasants, the most steady soldiers and reliable functionaries of Asia. They have been created and put on earth to till the cornfields, helped by their placid buffaloes, or to execute with exactness and courage precise orders, deeming

it the happiness of life regularly to receive a moderate pay and to see stripes and ribbons multiplying on their sleeves and breasts. This is not the summit of the functions of life, but nobody would now venture to assert that it is a function to be despised. The embassies, legations, and consulates in Turkey are in the guard of Turks. Those Turkish body-guards or *kavasses* display unimpeachable bearing and loyalty. To protect an ambassador, his baby, his dog, his hat and stick, they would draw the sword against a Pasha. The Turkish qualities of courage and clean fighting are moreover known, and there is no necessity to insist upon them after the testimony given by the English and French fighters returned from the Dardanelles. One example of their civilian possibilities is less known and may deserve to be stated.

In the Near East, the administration of the Ottoman public debt is regarded as a model. Its object, it is hardly necessary to recall, is to control a certain part of the Turkish public revenue and apply it to a sinking fund and the payment of interest on certain loans contracted in the West, chiefly in France. It constitutes a veritable government depart-

ment, employing some seven thousand agents scattered over the Ottoman Empire. These agents are all, or nearly all, Turks. Only a few hundred are Christian natives, and the foreigners are not more than a handful. But this handful directs. And everything works to perfection. In the general accountancy department Turkish scribes would often devote whole nights to correcting an error of a few farthings. Collections and payments were made with mathematical punctuality and exactness. In the most critical period of the Balkan War of 1912, when the whole of Turkey was literally starving, the service of the loan was not retarded by a single day, and in the midst of this immense and universal distress, the total revenue collected by its administrators showed a steady increase. I admit that the chief credit redounds to excellent chiefs. But consult these chiefs themselves—the Caillards, the Babington Smiths, the Blocks—and they will tell you that their efforts would have availed nothing had they not been able to rely on the administrative sense of duty of their army of Turkish collaborators.

To attempt brutally to destroy such an instrument of government, instead of utilising

it wisely, would be of all sorts of iniquities the most deplorable, because the most silly. It is well moreover to return for a last time to the close association between respect of Turkish nationality and the safeguarding of Armenian, Greek, and French interests in Turkey.

XXIV

If national independence be the reward of talent, courage, and martyrdom, then no nation deserves it more than the Armenians.

Unhappily, the most deplorable of historical fatalities may render difficult the realisation of the hypothesis. As the consequence of the lapse of ages, of the migration of peoples, Armenia progressively arrived at the verge of merely becoming a geographical expression. Nowhere are Armenians grouped in a nucleus of compact majority. Scattered over Russia, Persia, and Turkey, the unfortunate nation hardly anywhere represents more than a weak minority. I am not here concerned with the 1,500,000 Armenians of Russia, living chiefly in the Caucasus, nor with the 250,000 Armenians in Persia. But in Turkey itself, Constantinople, a town where the Armenian colony is very important, numbers only about 200,000 Armenians on a total population of about 1,200,000. Anatolia, the most essentially Turkish part of

Turkey, presents an overwhelming majority of about 5,000,000 Turks as against, roughly speaking, 300,000 Armenians. Finally, in the very seat of their ancient kingdom, in the region still called Greater and Lesser Armenia, according to French statistics, perhaps a little out of date but reliable at the time they were taken, there were only 850,000 Armenians to a population of 2,200,000 Turks and 1,600,000 Kurds. Hence the problem is not simple.

But if one considers how heavy is the debt of the West towards the Armenians, it will be at once acknowledged that the difficulty of the task does not relieve us from the obligation of honour and conscience to present to them a solution truly acceptable.

Twice has Europe kindled radiant hopes in the Armenian breast, twice has she held out to them dazzling possibilities of speedy liberation. Then, as they were beginning to raise their heads, assured as they thought of invincible support, either through some repulsive policy or piteous weakness, the oppressed people were left to face alone the resentment of their Turkish rulers. The latter, in order to punish what appeared to the

psychology of the rough troopers as nothing but rebellion and understanding with the enemy, then delivered up the lives, the property, and the honour of these wretched people either to the soldiers, with their blind obedience, or to the Kurds, for whom the persecution of Armenians is a hereditary tradition. For forty years Europe has failed to keep her word to the Armenians, has been breaking the promise of protection and control made in a special clause of the great Berlin Treaty. No blunder would be more gross than to think that they will acquit us and declare themselves content if, at the close of the war, we offer them Russian annexation as a remedy for their misery and a balm for their terrible wounds. They might indeed prefer it to Turkish domination independent of any Western control. Too edifying is the contrast between the prosperous and peaceful Caucasus and the wild, bloodstained oriental Anatolia. But more prosperous hours seem to have struck, which release us from so cruel a dilemma.

With the consciousness in them so strong and enduring throughout so many centuries of their personality and their ethnical value, a consciousness which persecution has exalted

to the wildest degree of passion, the Armenians aspire to develop their personality as freely, as fully as possible, and they are certainly not willing to see it become slowly evanescent in the ocean of an immense heterogeneous Empire. If there be any method of forming them into an entirely distinct and free nation, then we owe it to them to adopt that method without any conceivable hesitation. Should the consideration of physical possibilities, either geographical or administrative, doom us to refuse to the Armenian nation that supreme consolation, it would certainly be possibile, and therefore incumbent upon us in all justice, to secure for them a political status based on a real autonomy which should restore to them the life not only endurable but even happy that they led in the days of old, and which should add precise and definite guarantees against the recurrence of such atrocities as were inflicted upon them by the bloodthirsty neurasthenia of Abdul-Hamid and the ferocious incomprehension of Enver.

For in this question of the position of Armenians, as in so many others in Turkey, it is not the legal régime instituted by Ottoman public law that was bad, but the application that was made of it. It may be

recalled that the Mohammedan conception of conquest, strictly adopted by the Turks, had had theoretical conceptions most liberal and respectful of the subjugated nationalities. With their Patriarch, official head of the Armenian religion-nation (I translate literally the Arabic word *millet*, borrowed by the Turks and expressing at once the two conceptions, which are inseparable for the Moslem mind), with their churches, where the service is in Armenian, their schools, where the lessons are in Armenian, their law council, where cases of personal statute are tried in Armenian, with their national assembly discussing, in Armenian again, the Armenian ethnical interests, the Armenians possessed a basis of national survival such as was rarely obtained by Western nations fallen under the yoke of a European conqueror. On the other hand, the Armenians had long adapted themselves to leading a life in common with the Turks. Superiorly gifted for professional and business careers, they engaged in them with great profit, without exciting the jealousy of the Turks, whose inclinations lay in opposite directions, and who, deriving no little advantage from the useful and sincere collaboration of the Armenians, delighted, as we have said,

to describe them as "the Faithful Nation." The Armenians grew rich, influential, and, as the result of constant intercourse with Turks, the most Turkocised of all the non-Turkish people in the Ottoman Empire. Armenian families are the only ones in which the Turkish language has become almost a second mother tongue. In some it has even supplanted the native language, and Turkish is the only language spoken. Even now at Constantinople and throughout Anatolia there are legions of Armenian lawyers, doctors, journalists, bankers, and business men. All of them now, informed of the modern system of European public law, familiar with the principle of nationalities which constitutes its basis, ardently aspire to become again a nation, exclusive master of its soil and of its destinies. But if this were not to be achieved, perhaps it would not be erroneous to suggest, as a very secondary measure, that they might be satisfied with living in a Turkey which would remain Turkish by the maintenance of all the high privileges conceded to them in the days of old by the Sultans, supplemented, I need not say, by the essential prerogatives obtained in the name of Europe in the negotiations of 1913–14

by Russia and—such is the irony of things —by Germany; in a Turkey, Turkish again as regards the persistent use of a language familiar to them, by the retention of the positions they conquered in the sphere of liberal professions, of business, of social or administrative influence, but in a Turkey essentially different from the Turkey of Sultan Hamid or of Enver, by reason of a Westernised, clear-sighted system of government, and, at Stamboul, a Western control so firm on the rudder that finally would be realised the ideal to which they have been aspiring for so many years: complete, certain, and absolute security for their life, their honour, and their property, possibility of an entire trust in the goodwill and the authority of governors, judges, policemen, and constables; briefly, normal life in a country normally administered. For the rest, in a Turkey such as that, they would, it seems, look forward to their own diligence and industry to ensure a future as brilliant as was their past.

This subsidiary aspiration is assuredly not excessively ambitious, and the realisation of that aim cannot be conceived as embarrassing in any way that definite and objective

opening of the Straits to which Russia so legitimately aspires: two aspirations cannot thwart each other when between them exists not the slightest relation.

XXV

BEFORE being captured by Villehardouin and his peers, and later by the Janissaries of Mohammed II., Byzantium had to submit to investment by a personage of far higher prestige: Alcibiades. For the old Dorian colony held for Sparta, and war raging then between Sparta and Athens, the peerless dandy dear to Socrates, after his magnificent campaign of the Dardanelles, "went up against," says Amyot,* "those of Byzantium," and by dint of clever guiles, almost without any show of fight, took the town.

Now, this happened under the dazzling sky of the Greek Fifth Century, 2400 years ago. In what rustic huts, under what felt tents, were then living, in a barbarous and obscure life, the unknown ancestors of the Latin barons, and the Turkish beys, conquerors in 1204 and 1453? Here are, for

* Translating Plutarch's Lives.

Constantinople, magnificent title deeds of Hellenic nobility. Thinking on these things, how can one dare to smile at the *Mégali Idhéa*, that "glorious dream" slumbering in every Greek breast, all the dearer because unrealisable: the return of Byzantium to Hellenism?

Unrealisable! Yes, all intelligent Greeks know it full well. Constantinople is a jewel of such a wondrous price that none but the grandest lord dare claim to wear it. A nation of but a few million souls, however inimitable may have been its ancient history, cannot dream of entering the lists and contending for a prize, the possession of which is vital to the existence of one of the greatest empires in the world. But, on this very account, all the more passionately do the Greeks cling to those vestiges of an autonomous existence left to them by their Turkish conquerors, a pale and colourless life in comparison with the former imperial splendour, sadly like that which Odysseus saw among the Shadows in the Fields of Asphodels; but notwithstanding all, strangely persisted in and cherished with a diligence and patriotism truly touching.

One day, at Therapia, on the threshold of the distressingly modern hotel which has

replaced a historic inn, while waiting for the Constantinople boat, I was talking with my friend the old Grèek porter, whom the inn had bequeathed to the "Palace." In a corner, a child, his son, was reading a Greek book.

"May I look at your book?" I asked.

"Command!—*Orîsté*"—replied the child, politely, tending me the volume.

It was Lysias. Nothing more or less than the speeches of the purest of Attic orators.

"What!" I said to the father, "the child is reading Lysias!"

"Why not?" said the good porter, very simply. "It is one of his school books."

Vestiges of Greek culture involving the reading of Attic orators in an elementary school are surely to be appreciated. And the longer one lives at Constantinople the more plainly does one see how really grand they are and how deep rooted. Putting aside the Armenian families, one may truthfully say that Greek is the language which comes most naturally to Constantinople Christians, and I include among them French and British children born in Turkey. For in these Christian households nurses, housemaids, seamstresses, cooks and men-servants

are all Greek, and speak nothing but Greek. All the humble folk of the Christian quarter of Pera, in most of the villages on the Bosphorus and on the Sea of Marmora, in shops and workrooms are Greek and speak nothing but Greek. And I leave out of account the innumerable lawyers, doctors, bankers, business men, who are also Greek, but who know French. In reality the Greeks number some 400,000. Just think of the daily momentum of Greek influence in Constantinople resulting from these facts.

Further, among these relics of Hellenic life, there are some that may be even more flattering than those implied by demographical statistics. The œcumenical Greek Patriarch, officially known as "His Holiness," the recognised head of the Greek "nation-religion" * since the fall of the Empire, chief of the Holy Synod, chief of the Mixed Council, of the churches, convents, schools and hospitals, is a very high personage indeed. Every year, in the Imperial Palace, at the great hand-kissing ceremony, the Patriarch, preceding all the Turkish dignitaries, comes to make a speech to the Sultan in the Greek language. At his death,

* See *ante*, p. 173.

seated on his patriarchal throne, with painted face, clothed in his richest robes and ornaments, he is borne with pomp and pageantry in procession, Turkish troops lining the route. On New Year's Day the Russian Ambassador comes to kiss his ring.

How can one be astonished if the Greeks cherish such things! And if they can be permitted to retain them without injury to primordial interests, would it not be iniquitous to inflict cruel and needless suffering by ruthlessly thrusting aside with the sword these shadows of a marvellous past? And once again, what antinomy can there be between the maintenance of the Greek *status quo* in Turkish Turkey and the opening of the Straits to Russia? Why should this kill that? *

* An allusion to the well-known saying: "*Ceci tuera cela*," of Victor Hugo.

XXVI

FINALLY there remains the "France du Levant." *

When one has undertaken to do so, it is a fine and praiseworthy thing bravely to pursue the interests of others; but there is no reason why one should not at the same time protect one's own. I would even go the length of saying, without any apprehension of being contradicted, that when one acts as guardian, as does every government, the care not to sacrifice uselessly the interests of the ward to those of his friends, even the most valued, presents itself with the character of a particularly categorical imperative. It is unnecessary here to reassert either how extensive and ancient are French interests in Turkey, or to restate how legitimate as well as vital it is for Russia definitely and inalterably to secure the freedom of the Straits. But I must insist on

* See p. 58.

this idea which Monsieur de la Palisse * would not hesitate to advocate, and he is always of good counsel—that the day of a victorious peace should be a day of rejoicing for all the victorious combatants without exception; they should all, as a reward of their heroism in facing suffering and death, or of their patience in enduring anguish, poverty, and loss, attain not only the infinite satisfaction of triumph, but also the consoling consciousness of the establishment of an order of things more satisfactory and more secure. It would indeed be a surprising and hideous deception, if, in the last instance, this horrible game of war were to turn out little better than the child's game in which one loses by winning.† And utterly unpardonable and unpardoned would it be if, merely in order to gratify foreign imperialism and political conceit, among the various solutions offered, those were adopted which should sacrifice national interests, instead of those conciliating all the various interests at stake.

* The Sieur de la Palisse, a very courageous French nobleman of the sixteenth century, is for some unknown reason represented in France as the father of truisms.

† An allusion to the French nursery game of "Qui perd gagne."

As a result of the victory of France and her Allies, the situation of the French in Turkey should be improved rather than injured.

The elementary fairness of such a condition a child could understand, And, further, it is evident that no more than the question of the future status of Turks, Greeks, and Armenians in Turkey, could the restitution to Frenchmen of their former position in any way embarrass the solution of the Straits problem. For between the two matters, one essentially military, the other purely administrative and economic, there is no conceivable connection.

With the trifling exception of a few gendarme instructors, with whom the future reorganisers of Turkey might well dispense, the whole of that army of good French mercenaries whom the war drove from Constantinople, was known to be an army of civilian mercenaries. In what possible way could their return inconvenience the artillery officers, the engineers, the sailors and aviators on whom would devolve the task of keeping open the famous gateway? Activities so diverse and exercised in such divergent directions could not possibly interfere with one

another. The return of French professors to their *lycées*, of French monks and nuns to their hospitals and schools, of French financiers to their banks, of French engineers and administrators to their offices, of French artisans to their workshops, will in no way change the configuration of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, nor affect the task of their defenders. They would, all the same, have the keys of the house in their pockets. Now, that is the essential. The rest is mere redundance. And it is a redundance which our Russian friends, for the very reason that they are our friends, would assuredly be willing to forego, once they are convinced that by banishing French activities from Turkey, by destroying a marked and beneficial influence four centuries old, they would bring confusion, hardship, and in many cases complete ruin and despair, into numerous deserving French families, of whom some have been established in Turkey ever since the reign of Louis XIV., and of whom many will never succeed in effacing from their memory the vision of a humble wooden cross on the Moudros rock or in that fatal triangle of Seddul-Bahr.

XXVII

It would seem that such a solution as we have been envisaging, a solution of simple common sense, resulting from a series of unbiassed observations, must meet with less opposition than any other solution of the Near Eastern Question.

Naturally Armenians, Greeks, and Levantine French, whom the famous formula "Constantinople a Russian provincial town" had alarmed, would find no reason to oppose the inauguration of an order of things which, by guaranteeing them for ever against the useless suffering of the past, should, as far as any international agreement can, safeguard their moral and material interests.

Possibilities of that character, when they are considered under a certain angle, assume the appearance of ineluctable necessities. The realisation of those necessities finally, even with the Turks, would convert resistance into acquiescence.

On the day when Turkey took sides in the

duel between the two opposed political groups controlling the world, she fatally condemned herself to submit to the decision of whichever side was victorious.

Not that in any way Turkey represented the stake for both of the two contending parties. The design of entirely appropriating her, initially, was Germany's alone, but with that insight into military things which she pursues to the length of cynicism, Prussia herself, even if all her avowed schemes did not exist, would never have consented to run the risk that a fully independent Turkey should remain in a position to change her policy, in a more or less near future, as abruptly as she did in October, 1914, and thus to join the ranks of the Powers hostile to Germanism.

The Straits in the course of this war have revealed themselves of such an immense strategical and economic importance that no Power in the world would neglect, once this war is ended, to appoint to them the firm and trustworthy Porter * that the Sublime Porte has shown itself incapable of being. Now,

* An allusion to the historical pun of Aali Pasha who, speaking of the Straits, said, "La Sublime Porte est le Sublime Portier."

therefore, there remains for Turkey nothing to look forward to but to be controlled either by our enemies or by ourselves.

Undoubtedly, certain Turkish politicians will never admit this hard truth. They will struggle furiously, and, even when they see that the game is lost, will fight till they are killed or will emigrate to die in voluntary exile. I mean not merely those at present in power on whom rests the responsibility of the present fatal crisis and who therefore are doomed to fight for their lives, but many others, most of those rough, crude, but patriotic and sincere Parliamentarians who carried out the revolution of 1908, and laboured under the honourable delusion of a Turkey resuscitated according to the French model of 1789. At one moment of their short history, the realisation of their dream seemed so near and appeared to them so beautiful and so true, that they will never despair of seeing it some day realised, or they will die of that despair. This is certain, and it is exceedingly sad, because, whatever may affirm to the contrary the spokesmen of interests threatened by a Turkish renaissance, they were honest men who loved their country well.

But of such irreconcilable patriots the number will be small. Even in Turkish Turkey, and among the Turks, the weariness is immense. Already, before the war, Western people, travelling in Anatolia, heard the peasants uttering this cry of despair: "Ah! let the Ghiaoors * (Unbelievers) come, and let there be an end of it."

The reason of such despair is not far to seek: too heavy increase of taxation in regions now as much as ever lacking roads, doctors, good judges, and a good police; too exacting recruiting officers for wars which bring nothing but disaster. Bled white and half ruined by the war of 1912, the Anatolian peasantry will return from this conflict reduced to their last gasp. If these peasants see that the contemplated changes touch neither the Sultan nor the mosques, neither the imams nor the women's veils, they will offer no more resistance than the Vendeans and Bretons of the French revolution would had they been left their King and their priests. And were these essentials to be respected, they would not stir even if the

* Ghiaoor, or even Ghiavoor, is the corrupted Turkish popular rendering of the Arabic Kâfir, which means an Unbeliever, or, more literally, a Denier of the mission of the Prophet.

present miserable administration were to continue, so completely and through so many centuries have these simple souls grown accustomed to being exploited. But were they, on the other hand, to feel their fiscal burden lightening, to behold the miracle of good and safe roads, of impartial justice, administered promptly and cheaply, of doctors and hospitals giving their sick enlightened attendance, they would turn up the palms of their hands to heaven and sing praises to Allah.

Now, in Turkey the peasants—I recall it because this highly important yet obscure fact is too often ignored—constitute 95 to 98 per cent. of the seven to eight millions of the purely Turkish population. An immense majority would thus be won over by the simple play of the Principle of Least Suffering, by the simple fact that, nothing wounding their hereditary affections and beliefs, they would experience a marked improvement in the conditions of existence. There are many reasons for believing that in the infinitesimal remainder of the nation the same causes would produce the same results.

The dynasty does not and cannot say it,

but it is as weary as the people. The first sentiment of the imperial princes on the fall of Abdul Hamid was one of intense delight. They acclaimed the revolutionaries who broke open the doors of the gaol in which the morbid, suspicious tyrant had confined them. But since then it has all been deception and anguish. Treasury grants and the civil list were cut down to such an extent that the Sultan and the princes found themselves in very reduced circumstances. Savage contests between political parties accompanied by military risings and assassinations plunged Constantinople into a terror such as only those can realise who beheld the reactionary movement of April, 1909, when the immense capital lay defenceless, at the mercy of an army of private soldiers who had imprisoned or murdered their officers, invaded the parliament, and assassinated deputies and ministers. Elsewhere enemies were attacking the empire, conquering province after province. In 1911, Italian cannon thundered in the Dardanelles. In 1912, the princes in their Bosphorus villas heard the Bulgarian cannon, and consulted as to whether they should flee to Broussa. In 1915, it was the cannon of Russian war ships away towards the Bosphorus, the

torpedoes of French and British submarines in the direction of the Golden Horn. And once again the terror-struck dynasty wondered whether the moment had not come for flight to Asia. Then followed that tragic and supreme horror, a pool of blood and emerging therefrom the ghastly face of the heir apparent. An order which would restore to them a sense of security, which would hold out a prospect of peaceful leisure, of honours and adequate treasury grants, enjoyed in those palaces, which they have so often feared to lose, would in every probability appear to them a most acceptable penance.

There is little doubt that a similar feeling of relief and satisfaction would most certainly be experienced by civil functionaries of every rank, as soon as they realised that, far from having the bread taken out of their mouths, their rations would be increased and regularly distributed, while at the same time they would retain all their gold lace, ribbons, and medals. In Turkey no appointments are more sought after than those of the foreign directed Ottoman Debt, the Imperial Bank, and the Tobacco Régie, for the reason that salaries are good and regularly paid, also that the reward of good service is an honourable

future and an adequate pension. Among the officers of the army *amour propre* is certainly more highly strung and patriotism more sensitive. But even their hearts could hardly fail to be won by a system of politeness, tact, good nature, increased pay, and scrupulous justice in matters of advancement and promotion, which should reverse all those conditions under which they have long suffered. Such a policy, persistently pursued and accompanied by an attitude of perfect deference towards the sovereign and the Moslem religion, would lead to the creation of an admirable auxiliary army such as would cast into the shade the Garde Suisse, the Garde Ecossaise, and all the foreign regiments of our French Kings.

There now remain for our consideration only the landowners and the few business men of Turkish race.

In Turkey, during the last six or seven years, the tax on landed property has increased by more than thirty-five per cent. And the landowners have seen no corresponding benefit. In districts bordering on the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora wayfarers returning home at nightfall must needs carry a lantern; for the darkness is denser than

in London or Paris during a night raid, and in paths and roads there are so many holes, filled according to the season with thick dust or liquid mud, that belated walkers are in constant danger of breaking their necks. Electric light is unheard of. The telephone is a recent innovation. There are no land banks. A landowner in want of capital must go to usurers and pay interest at the rate of nine per cent. for a term of three years at the most. Police and gendarmes make no attempt to protect the land against the encroachments of brutal and sometimes even murderous Circassian or Albanian emigrants. Laws relating to real estates are ridiculously archaic, very badly applied, and provocative of unscrupulous and interminable law suits. As an inevitable consequence, land never fetches one quarter of its intrinsic value: an estate situated about three hours' journey from Constantinople, which ought under normal conditions to bring in annually some 50,000 francs, is with difficulty let at a rental of 8000. As for commerce, it has been utterly ruined by seven years of almost constant civil or foreign war; and the recent formidable requisitions of Enver pasha must have dealt it its final blow. I do not question

the patriotism of Turkish landowners and business men. But if their patriotism, which is above all things dynastic and Moslem, were to be satisfied that the dynasty and Islam would be respected, then no class in Turkey would welcome more gladly a new order which would triple or quadruple the landowners' fortune, increase the merchants' business tenfold, and for both alike render life far more secure and more pleasant.

XXVIII

A FEW of my Eastern friends, Moslems, Jews, Christians, with whom I conferred on these grave matters, on these last points displayed some anxiety and scepticism.

"Even were it admitted," they argued, "that the barbarous system of the apportionment of human cattle be solemnly condemned, can you be sure that the adoption in future international relations of the more lenient and equitable system of an intelligent guardianship, careful of the people's interests, will correspond in its practical results to the nobility of the conception? Once your victory won, will not your conquerors, forgetful of all their war rhetoric, unmindful of the programmes in which are printed in special large type the words Liberty, Justice, Respect for the Rights of Nations, fall rapidly into a policy of mere conquest; will they not convert the paternal guardianship into a brutal aggression, an enterprise of cruelty

and force, levelling everything, centralising everything, making short work of national traditions ? "

To argue thus seems to me singularly short-sighted. It betrays a total miscomprehension of the philosophy of the present struggle, truly " the struggle between day and night," * between the spirit of generosity and independence of the peoples and the despotism and egoism of Germanic feudalism. The ideal conceived in the enemy camp has been given a striking expression in the Latin invocation of Ferdinand of Coburg : to destroy throughout Europe every non-German centre of resistance, to enslave them by military occupation, then, kneeling before the Kaiser, head of the Holy German Empire, for every German aristocrat the only possible leader and chief, to put one's hands in his, to avow oneself his liegeman, saying, in the very tongue of the Middle Ages : *Ave, Cæsar, imperator et rex.* . . . In brief, a leap back of a thousand years, the reconstitution of Europe according to the conceptions of Frederick Barbarossa. In our camp, where are pitched row after row

* An allusion to the last words of Victor Hugo pronounced on his death-bed : " *C'est ici le combat du jour et de la nuit.*"

interminably the tents of the most ancient champions of political and national liberty the modern world has ever known, the ideal is quite different. Though we count among us the whole of non-Teutonic nobility, all serving marvellously, it is a camp essentially liberal, nobody there dreams either of kneeling down or of making others kneel. I would add that it is a camp of the people, conscious that victory shall be due to the valour and the endurance of the people much more than to some transcendental genius of their statesmen. This armed people fights neither for domination nor for glory, and still less blindly to sanction some ingenious system of accomplished facts which it may have pleased the diplomacy of rulers to conceive in secret. It fights in order once for all to have peace pure and simple, in order that henceforth neither through greed nor stupidity may suffering be inflicted by Prussian barons, *Aghas* of Turkish Janissaries, and other lords of like mental calibre. And their lordships may rest assured that henceforth so pernicious a career will be closed to them. But they may be equally sure that neither shall we inflict suffering on the peoples for the mere pleasure of doing so, or to satisfy

some mania for domination; that is not our way. Never will the liberals of England, France, Italy, and even Russia,* who form the immense mass of our allied armies, collaborate in the work of torturers. Never would they descend to the rôle of oppressor. They are for that too large hearted and also too wise. They are too well aware that any political fabric reposing upon a foundation of needless suffering must be unstable and liable to shocks and revolts and horrible massacres. Now, under no pretext whatever will they tolerate a policy of human butchery. And their blood, shed lavishly in three continents, will give to them all alike the right to make their voices heard on the day of the framing of the future constitution of the world. The Congress of Brussels shall not be another Congress of Vienna. In truth, if there be one thing which this war has killed it is the gaoler-state. The idea of nations exploited by the relentless egoism of a handful of foreign rulers is dead. A keen eye may perceive in the immediate future the spectacle of peoples which have already attained their majority, which are mature and completely independent, and of peoples who

* Written in February, 1916.

are not yet of age and are still under guardianship,—but of no people of convicts. In the mist of a future more remote it may discern the yet brighter spectacle of the peaceful and orderly collaboration of all nations on earth, of those who have in the past suffered most, side by side with those who have been the most dominant: Jews, Poles, Armenians, Arabs as well as French, British, Russians, Turks, and Germans; all definitely enlightened, matured and freed from prejudice, not even conceiving any other relations between one another than those which now in a civilised state regulate the bonds between honourable and cultivated families.

Such a future may appear far distant, on the extreme verge and dim horizon of human vision. No matter. Thus in the terrible misery of this hour, more horrible perhaps than our poor humanity has ever yet experienced, at the end of the blood-stained, corpse-strewn road, winding through smoking ruins, there shines divinely an apparition of supreme consolation: Liberty waving on high her glorious torch and displaying to the weakest eyes an axiom so simple, so ignored and so necessary: "Every nation governed according to its will, and

by whom it will, not doing to any other nation what it would not like done to itself."

Thus ordains the play of the most secret, the most patient, but the most irresistible force in the world: the Force of Things, of which the Tendency to the Least Suffering is one of the manifestations perceptible to our weak sight. The ancients, bowing before its mysterious omnipotence, named it Destiny, and having realised that there is no other wisdom than to penetrate its intentions and to conform to them, they addressed by the mouth of one of their Sages this celebrated warning to the rapacity and the pride of man—

Destiny guides him who consents and drags him who resists.

(*Fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt.*)

PARIS, *July*, 1915—*February*, 1916.

EPILOGUE

SINCE this book was written there have occurred events of enormous import, events rare and portentous, ranking among those which change for ever the course of history, by transmuting the most essential values in the ethics of humanity.

Endowed with the rare genius of conceiving that things can be otherwise than they are, President Wilson, braving the sarcasms of the blind and the protests of the ambitious, has dared to state that peace must be the lasting law of intercourse between men, to introduce an ethical principle into international relations, to demand the organisation of states in a civilised community which shall regard war as a no less primitive and barbarous method of settling disputes than now appears to us the ordeal by single combat.

So bold an announcement amazed the whole

world. Mankind greeted it at first with silence; then it broke into deafening applause. The idea was so grand, so obviously true, that even Prussia dared not to gainsay it.

But something even greater and better was to come.

Morality becomes law only when human might is ready to enforce it. At the service of the principle of a necessary and perpetual peace in a Society of Nations President Wilson put all the might of the greatest and the most pacific state in the world. Cut to the heart by the cowardly cruelty of the submarine warfare, convinced that as long as central Europe remained a Prussian drill-ground there could be no real world peace, he loudly proclaimed that the United States engaged in a war of pure principle, but an implacable war, which should endure until the Twilight of the War-Gods, until the final overthrow of Valhalla.

Henceforth, therefore, and for ever is abolished the contrary principle that might is right, that armed conquest is lawful, that authority may be established at the point of the sword. Henceforth the rape of a province, the subjection of a people, is a crime. The Society of Nations implies, as its logical

basis, free peoples, choosing their own governments. The Gaoler-State is dead indeed. Its ancient mask of laurels has been torn away. On its naked countenance it is now seen that what once appeared glory is in reality shame.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, in the most extraordinary, most unexpected manner this new right of peoples was being manifested. The Slav soul rising at length against the Mongolian-Prussian régime of Tsarism, broke it completely in a few days and declared Russia a convert to the dogma of the Society of Free Nations. Then, with a precision in logic and an intellectual courage in ideas of which history gives no precedent, the new Russia denounced all plans of annexation and proclaimed the independence of Poland.

Thus by a sort of miracle the theories maintained in this book, formerly regarded by many as audacious or fantastic, now find themselves all confirmed or even surpassed. Notably, Constantinople will not be a "Russian provincial town." It might appear, in fact there is really no doubt, that the Tsar's agents and his press deceived us when they represented Constantinople as

the principal, the intangible, factor in the military enthusiasm in the Russian soldier. The aspiration was not national; it was nothing but the imperialism of a Foreign Office.

And so the Turkish nationality will after all be respected, equitably, honourably, like any other. I need not repeat why this is to be appreciated. But this does not mean that certain facts may be ignored, which remain because they are facts: the suffering of the Armenians,—the suffering of the Greeks,—the suffering of the Arabs,—the suffering of the Turks,—the geographical fact that between the Russian ports of the Black Sea and the free spaces of the Mediterranean winds the narrow passage of the Straits, a fact so important that, unless she be prepared for suicide, Russia cannot resign herself to regard it with indifference. Finally, to all these serious matters we must add that most disquieting fact of the inevitable breakdown of Turkish finance, of complete bankruptcy.

Each of these facts is a problem in itself. Their solution rests with the peoples' diplomacy. We may be assured that the solutions conceived by that diplomacy, acting in the

spirit of which it will be President Wilson's eternal glory to have been the initiator, will be a solution honest and generous, consequently excellent, pervaded with the essence of the Principle of Least Suffering.

PARIS, *August*, 1917.

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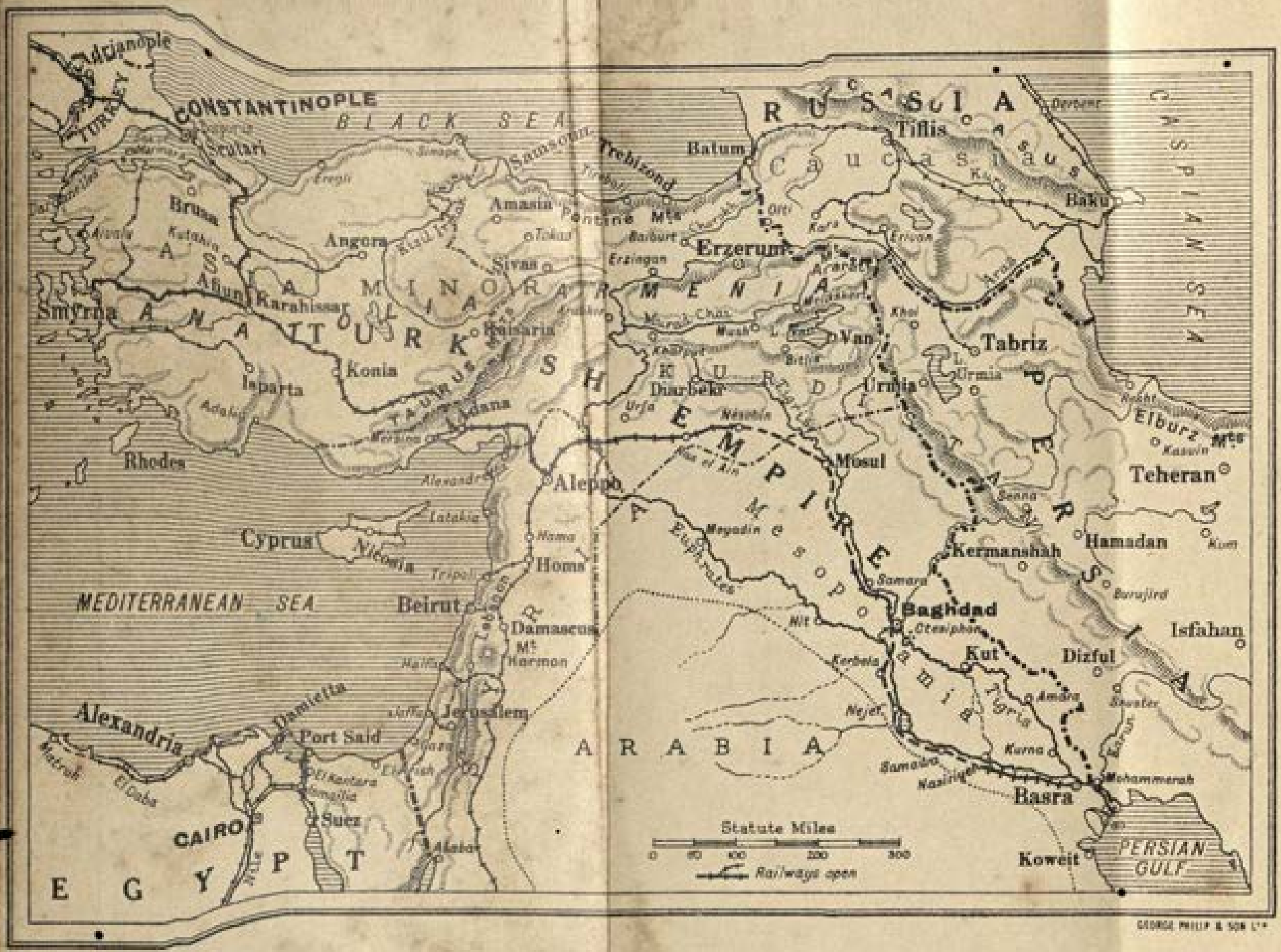

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